

Music & Letters

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Editorial	219
The Spirit of Music Kath. M. Wilson	222
The World's Sweet Inn A. E. Brent Smith	227
Vocal and Unvocal Various Authors	235
Mozart and Gluck H. Abert	256
Sound and Colour L. Sabaneev	266
Boris Godunov (Editions) Scott Goddard	278
Fundamentals of Folk Music J. Mark	287
String Chamber Music J. A. Watson	292
Hackneyed Music A. Kalisch	299
Musical Reproductions H. R. Rivers-Moore	304
Register of Books; Books Received	307
Reviews of Books and Periodicals	311
" Music and Gramophone Records	317

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Music and Letters

JULY, 1929.

VOLUME X

No. 3

EDITORIAL

IN the April number a hundred more annual subscribers to *MUSIC AND LETTERS* were asked for, as the minimum necessary to enable the magazine to be carried on. It is a pleasure to be able now to say that even more than a hundred additional subscribers are there, and that the 'hundred' will make it possible to continue the magazine and the 'more,' we will hope, to improve it. As earnest of that, and by way of saying a prompt thank you to our new subscribers, this July number has added ten pages to its normal compass. We owe warm thanks to those lovers of music and of letters who used influence and oratory to bring about this result. May the shadow of their protection never grow less!

Grateful as any editor must be for such testimony to the value set upon his paper, a swift response like this is of far greater importance as a measure of the growing interest here in music. Two generations ago that interest was watched by parents with some little anxiety: music was thought to make a boy 'moony,' and it was held desirable that in a girl it should be no more than an 'accomplishment.' Thirty years ago the public schools began to take music seriously, and women to compose: a headmaster wrote, as the refrain to a school-song, 'And now there's no fellow Who can't play the cello, O so well O'—and a royal princess wore a Doctor's hood. About that time appeared 'Studies in Modern Music,' and people began to see that they had hitherto been making and hearing music without much thought, and that there was a good deal more in it than meets the ear. Cecil Sharp had visions, Vaughan Williams interpreted them; Elwes and Greene sang, Parratt and Borwick played. Books came out, treading on each other's heels, and the thanks for any research they contained was 'due,' as often as not, to Barclay Squire. The Oxford History

and a second 'Grove' summed these labours; the Purcell Society pointed the way to Fellowes's edition and the Tudor church music; a third 'Grove' is now accomplished, a second Oxford History is reaching us in instalments, a Dictionary of Chamber Music has just appeared.

It is sometimes thought that the fact that music is being much written about is a sign that it is not being much made. There were no critics, it is pointed out, under Elizabeth. Perhaps it would have been better if there had been a few. With some healthy praise and healthier blame, but in either case greater vulgarisation, the madrigal era might then have extended beyond one generation. The fact that the impetus given by Parry and Stanford fifty years ago has not yet died out may not be wholly independent of another fact, that most dailies and weeklies of any standing give a good deal of space to the subject; and this was not always so. But their enthusiasm for it is inevitably tempered by consideration of what may be its value as news, and of how it may be expected to appeal to readers who are not specialists nor practitioners, but only men of general education and wide interests.

A musical journal, on the other hand, is not restricted to what readers who are not specifically versed in music can be expected to understand, and in proportion to the rarity of its visits it can dispense with being topical. Indeed, as Meg Dods would say, what for no? Musical opportunities may be news—Mr. Theremin, Master Menuhin, the Frothblower's Anthem, 'Judith' (Goossens), or the new helicon (if that is its name) that is such a godsend to the gramophone companies—each of these in its day is news. But music itself is never news; it can only intensify what we already know; it begins to be music only when it reaches the feelings and, since a man does not wear those on his sleeve, that takes time. When Wagner in the 'seventies seemed the newest thing out, he was engaging the intellect; now that he plays havoc with our feelings, we see that the noblest part of him is Beethoven; and that we could not know at first. Musicians are very much alone. They have all sorts of intimate experiences, and no one, as a rule, to exchange them with. So that if someone will get up once a month, or once a quarter—when there has been time for reflection—and say just how the thing appealed to him, for one, that is what they want to read. He will, very likely, not hit on our particular idea of the beauty that was there, but by a word here or a phrase there he may suggest that shy thing:—

We have built houses for Beauty, and costly shrines,
And a throne in all men's view;
But she was afar on a hill where the morning shines
And her steps were lost in the dew.

But writers of prose have to be content with humbler and more practical subjects, as a rule; and there is a large fringe of unexplored topics. Here are a few to begin with:—

Competition festivals, how to run and how not to run them.

The future of cinema music and musicians.

Rhythm of the Latin and the Nordic races.

The world's orchestras.

'It used to be a virtue to score well; now it is a vice to score badly.'—(Stanford.)

The voice as an orchestral instrument.

How to start and to maintain a musical library.

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Musical notation of the last fifty years—and the next fifty.

Various monographs on the melody (or harmony, or rhythm) each of some one composer.

The English operetta since Sullivan.

A defence of jazz, if possible.

No one, of course, can suggest a subject for anyone else; but a glance through these might start a body thinking. There is, hidden away somewhere, someone who has special knowledge on some one subject like these, and has never thought of letting other people know it. It is for such a person that a magazine like this exists, and it is a pity not to make use of it. One of these days England may be leading the world in musicology, instead of being led by one or other of the Continental nations, as at present; and it would be better to be in the van than in the rear of such a movement.

THE SPIRIT OF MUSIC

You know the calm of a little town on a Sunday afternoon, how the very stones of the houses, the very grit on the road seem to doze, and every excitement whether of business or emotion fades out. On no other day in the week are the citizens all clad in respectability, with not a rent, not a spot to mar their garments, and their minds swathed in an after-dinner haze. The householder walks forth with fur-coated matron, conscious of his best behaviour. The young men loiter along the street with aimless canes. Even the children modify their natural manner out of respect to their Sunday clothes. When into such a slumbering concord a circus party rumbles jingling and hollailing, it strikes a startling note. The canes of the young men no longer wave in aimless rhythms, for the jibes of the circus girls whirling past in dusty and coloured caravans put the Sunday repose to flight. Sedate matrons cannot stop the street arabs running away in the garments of their Sunday sons. It is off to the green where these wild people camp! Everything young in the town tingles with astonishment and delight.

This is the Spirit of Music, the gipsy Spirit, the unexpected Spirit, that leaps out of some simple tune, some beautiful tone, some lovely discord, dispelling the habitual slumber of our minds and haling us off to the green encampments of sheer wonder. It is always thus, with an unexpected challenge, that the Spirit of Music captures us. It may bring a heavenly rather than an earthly radiance, but whether it comes to a barbaric or an angelic messenger its method is always the gipsy one, entering suddenly, unpreluded. And the Spirit knows no welcome but the ecstatic thrill, the amazed surprise, for it does not appear in all music—not by any means. It eludes our search, then dances unasked into our enraptured mind. The student does not often find it in his score; it cannot easily leap that barrier, or the impertinent five-barred gate of his intellect. *First subject, bridge passage, second subject!* Such are not the stepping-stones the gipsy chooses across the stream to where our spirit lies slumbering; she must often smile as we try to organise her wayward coming. Nor do we usually meet her in those drawing-rooms where music ceases to be either an art or a pastime and becomes a polite entertainment. And yet she may take mocking delight in such performances, laughing at the uneasiness her devotees feel, the constrained hush, the polite boredom, the unintelligent pretence at enjoyment, and perhaps to clinch the

absurdity she slips into the mind of an unsophisticated listener and reveals herself, the unbelievable Spirit of beautiful sound.

To talk prose about what deserves a better fate, and explain the raptures of music in practical terms, we must say that they rest on its ability to surprise. Only the first unanticipated contacts throw our common expectation off its guard, and awaken what in pure prose we must call a fanatical enthusiasm—an enthusiasm springing from sense impressions with an imaginative appeal. We may measure the effect of surprise in our appreciation of sound beautiful beyond imagination, by our paler delight in the repetition. Take away surprise and you take its Spirit from music; every thrill it has given depends on surprise.

Music has great power to surpass the limits of imagination, but the imagination has an almost equal facility in re-creating and imagining afresh what it has once experienced, and is not easily astonished in the same way again. Thus the most musical experiences usually occur in childhood. It is an astounding experience to hear for the first time a piano or an organ played perfectly, a bass voice that is less a noise than a well of deep sound, a soprano voice with no strain in it but pellucid and rich. We may like to listen to such music at all times, but only once does it move us to unbounded enthusiasm, as a miracle almost too wonderful to believe. Nor does this first rapture herald further raptures, for never again shall we bear easily the slap-dash piano, the smudgy organ, the ninety-nine voices of our friends, and even the hundredth voice that opened the doorway of brightest, sweetest sound, will not again move us to such delighted astonishment; at best the original light dims to a reflection, that weakens at each repetition till perhaps little remains of the first brilliance but a sentimental glow. Yet it is by such raptures in childhood that the great goddess recruits her train-bearers. The violin especially recruits with a golden earnest. An amateur performer may express his musical instincts through the piano from inertia in his choice, or through his voice because nature gave him a good one, but the quite fanatical love of the violin shown by so many who have attempted to master it, and also by many who listen to it as their favourite instrument, springs from an unforgettable first contact. It may give the strongest and certainly the strangest sense of revelation, as of a paradise of sound whose gateway the skilled fingers of the violinist unfastens. A first hearing of the violin should stir every sensitively musical child. The marvel is rather that any should escape, than that some few catch sight through it of golden universes, and sip from a stream of exquisite tones. Perhaps some forget it by too young a draught. It may have come too soon to a certain child of less than three, who looked as if some heavenly elixir poured into

her ears when she first heard the violin discourse a folkdance of her race. To astound the older child takes a better player, but once he tastes the delight, he wishes to do so again, and not by the grown man's 'encore'; he cannot rest till he himself fumbles at the gates of paradise with a violin of his own. Stiff fingers, stubby fingers, a brain that ill co-ordinates the movements of his body, nothing will stop him; he must see the wondrous garden again. He remains a slave of the violin till the memory of his initiation fades, and with a reverence for the very gate quite incomprehensible save to others who fiddle with the same lock.

Not all musicians are devotees of their art. To some music is an ambition, to others bread and butter, to many a game, to a great number a polite accomplishment or a cult, to a horde a pleasantly stimulating or soothing sensation. But to some it is almost a religion. These are the enthusiasts who once having glimpsed the Spirit of Music, make a pilgrimage of their life to find her again—a pilgrimage in search of beauty as romantic as a legendary quest, and with the Jacobite quality of devotion in a doomed cause. Any reasonable man can see that the more often music surprises him, the less surprises it has in reserve, and the less easily will his spirit be so divinely taken unawares. Yet instead of rationing his music with a Saxon thrift, he must spare no pains to follow the camp of his doom like any airy-brained Celt. Oh happy fool at the beginning of your journey, when you hold your breath to hear an orchestra play in tune, when you listen amazed to an organ that moves daintily and cleanly and not like an elephant pouring ill-digested sounds through its trunk, when for once the singing of an unaccompanied chorus sounds beautiful beyond belief. Though these delights may always please, they soon lose their thrilling quality. The Spirit of Music does not appear on the ways her pilgrim has trod too often. One might expect him then to slacken his pursuit, but no, Music has many virgin ways for his footfall. The first Handel *largo* that sounds on the strings, the first Purcell air that is truly and cleanly sung, the first Bach sonata he hears from his organ, move him to an enthusiasm not much less strong than his first. He explores on the trail of these portents till Handel ceases to surprise, perhaps till he hears Purcell's Evening Service in G minor—and that for reasons known to those who provide the music in churches, he will have some difficulty in wearing out; and he launches a bark on the apparently illimitable sea of Bach. But the widest ocean has its furthest shore, and Bach repeats his own lovely *clichés* till the Spirit of Music forsakes them.

And now our questing hero takes fresh heart and determines to educate his mind to penetrate where his imagination has not led him. He betakes himself to music of orchestra and string quartet

listening, listening with a new earnestness and possibly an occasional score; he bends his thews to the task. And here on his now strenuous journey he has his reward, and a new hope. He has learnt that the Spirit may lurk in music and yet not show herself at the first hearing, the mind being too dazed by sound to know what it hears. The twentieth fugue he listens to will more likely surprise his admiration than the first. Thus the questing musician finds a good reason for hearing all the music he can and as often as he can. Good reason he finds, and yet not very good, for once the fugue has captured his veneration it begins to lose its power. The ardent musical pilgrim leaves behind him a trail of sucked oranges. What a glory once radiated from the 'Tannhäuser' overture, its climax so filled with strands of melody that one would think no room remained for any other when the final sonorous strain breaks in to outreach the bounds of our belief! And then perhaps 'the unfinished' symphony, or 'the fifth' or even the more delightful 'sixth' come to lie with a yellow radiance on the backward horizon of his path, still golden in the distance but juicy no longer.

Yet there are many islands of pure delight, with a flora sufficiently individual to have a charm of its own—a Field nocturne, a Schubert song, a Mozart minuet—and unexpected places in well known lands—'Don Giovanni' with its puissant music when he anticipated a 'Magic Flute,' or the enchanting 'Meistersingers' when he looked for some bulbous emotion. And chance may bring our pilgrim whole continents of new experience. The discovery of English folksong poured fresh blood into many, pale from the rigours of the quest. Then what enthusiasm! What thrills of pure, strong melody! Some thought that now at last the Spirit of Music would shine in old England with a steady light. Or the songs of the Hebrides stirred the strangest feelings in the Scottish Celt, as if he discovered treasure which had lain in the garret of his memory for centuries. So too the finding of Elizabethan choral music promised like Bach a sea of inexhaustible surprise and beauty, though at last the names of Byrd and Gibbons and Weelkes no longer guarantee to astonish the imagination, as they once did, with garlands of tunes and bouquets of tunes tossing about us till it seemed as if some alchemist had transmuted the whole world into a fountain of delicious sound.

As the quest wears to its end the Spirit of Music becomes more difficult to surprise. Her pilgrim has sought too often in the old haunts, and knows where in the past she can never await him. There remains pioneer music. He has already found her in the cool springs, the whispering leaves, the sunlight of Debussy, in the sombre shadows of Franck, and looked for her in vain in Ravel. Or he may have caught glimpses of her in Russian music. Now he

adventures on newer ground. He possibly finds her in a Vaughan Williams choral setting of a folksong, in 'The Hymn of Jesus,' in 'On first hearing the Cuckoo in Spring,' and yet he does not always find her where he seeks in the composers who surprised his admiration there. His journey becomes uncertain, the direction blundering and haphazard. He perceives a glimmer, but on turning to pursue the hint sees nothing but waste land, or not expecting his goddess where he goes, he suddenly hears a ripple of her laughter, till he reaches what must be the final stage in his musical development, driven by an inexorable devotion out into the unfamiliar. At last he sits with horn-rimmed gaze before the music of Stravinsky and Schönberg, waiting for the gipsey to break his Sunday repose.

KATHARINE M. WILSON.

THE WORLD'S SWEET INN

MANY, many years ago a poet spoke of art as the World's Sweet Inn, because it was thither that men and women repaired for repose and refreshment when wearied by their wanderings on the World's Busy Thoroughfare. Examining some of the recent productions of art one wonders what comfort and refreshment the ordinary man can obtain to-day from the World's Sweet Inn, since those responsible for the catering no longer care to provide such things as the pilgrims can digest, preferring to experiment in strange concoctions which not only fail to nourish but even produce feelings of impatience or disgust. Is it surprising then that the weary pilgrims turn away from the Cecilia Arms and patronise the jazz vaults, where if they do not get nourishment and happiness, they do at least get frivolity and pleasure?

Turning from fable to fact we find to-day the distressing situation of a large multitude earnestly desiring attractive music, and a small number of gifted composers capable of producing attractive music, at loggerheads with one another. In between we have a large number of critics, who sincerely believe that they are the oracles of public opinion. But alas! there is often nothing less definite and less representative of the feelings of the majority than that which we call public opinion.

It is only necessary to read the leading articles in various political journals to discover that each point of view is supposed to be public opinion. For example, in the *Daily Mars* we may read 'Public opinion will no longer tolerate the dilatoriness and procrastination of the Tory Party.' Taking up the next paper, the *Daily Tribune*, we read 'The present policy of the Socialist Party—if indeed such obvious catch-vote methods can be honoured by being called a policy—is leading the country rapidly to ruin. But they will soon learn that public opinion will never tolerate such experiments upon the social constitution.' From these typical passages it will be seen that the words 'public opinion' are merely a substitute for argument: 'deceiving where we cannot prove.'

Public opinion, then, can be understood as meaning the opinion of those with whom we are in agreement, perhaps the friends with whom we are in daily contact and therefore probably possessed of those views which we ourselves hold. Schoolmasters in their courses

may frequently meet other schoolmasters, and together they may lament the decay of Greek versifying among boys. They are not justified, however, in proclaiming in the Press that public opinion is all against the neglect of Greek versifying, since the majority of men and women have never even heard whether there be such a thing as a Greek verse.

Unfortunately coteries of literary, musical and artistic folk are apt to base their judgments upon the opinions of those with whom they are in agreement, prefacing their verdict with those judicial words: 'Public opinion decides.' For example, every year there is an outburst by some jaded critic against the performance of 'Elijah' or 'Messiah' at the Three Choirs Festival: 'The public is heartily sick of the monotonous fare provided at these music meetings. Is there not some little known work of Berlioz or Mahler which these festivals might produce instead of that vast collection of commonplaces by that barbarian, Handel?' The truth is that the public is not sick of these masterpieces, because to many of the public adequate performances of such oratorios are as rare and delightful as is a visit to Switzerland by one of these jaded critics. Doubtless to the Swiss their own country is too familiar to be exciting, but if in their haste they said that the public was heartily sick of the Matterhorn they would be very far from the truth. Doubtless the musicians who are familiar with 'Elijah' and 'Messiah'—the Matterhorn and Mt. Blanc of music—are longing to attack the Himalayas of music with their lofty, cloud-capped Mt. Everest, the 'St. Matthew Passion'; or the blazing and lurid Cotopaxi, the 'Requiem' of Verdi; or the distant pure white Barrier of the Antarctic, the 'Stabat Mater' of Palestrina; still, there will always be a vast spellbound multitude gazing in a rapture of admiration upon Mt. Blanc and the Matterhorn.

This gradually widening gulf between specialist-opinion and general-opinion is to be discovered not only in the world of music. If we take up our daily paper we shall almost certainly find a number of letters advocating an increase in the height or width of cricket stumps to prevent 'the outstanding supremacy of the bat over the ball.' But we all know that though the Hobbs and the Hammonds may find it a simple matter to knock up a hundred, the rest of us are very hard put to it to keep the ball away from the stumps. In fact, most of us would advocate shorter stumps, less fielders, a bigger ball, anything in fact which would make us feel a little more secure from the horror of ducks. Again, so-called 'tigers' at golf, terrible young men who can hit the ball incredible and indecent lengths, are for ever toying with the idea of a larger or lighter ball to prevent such colossal lengths being obtained; but the 'rabbit,' whose ambition

it is to hit the ball two hundred yards and whose habit it is to hit it into the nearest bunker, feels no such necessity. The ordinary man to whom golf is a real but occasional pleasure would deeply resent any change which would deprive him of that pleasure; so, too, the ordinary man to whom music is a real but occasional pleasure would strongly resent being deprived of that pleasure, and being, as an alternative, forced to listen to music with which he has no sympathy.

It is a truth, then, that the specialist does not really represent public opinion. If the public was all of the same age in experience as the specialist, doubtless his strictures upon the old masters would be received with acclamations. But unfortunately our lives are for ever passing away and new lives starting, so that though we know these masterpieces too well, there are others, young and as yet inexperienced in art, who are anxious to hear and to form their own opinions. Is it not reasonable that parents, wishing to initiate their children into the beauties of music, should choose the 'Messiah' for their baptism of sound? What, indeed, could be better? And, since there is always a fresh generation of the young to be initiated there will (seemingly) always be a fresh and enthusiastic audience for those established masterpieces.

The exasperation which the jaded critic may feel with those people who still cling to their old favourites, though excusable, ought in fairness to be checked. After all, the critic speaks only for himself out of his over-ripe experience and only on his own particular line of study. Of painting and sculpture he has probably only an average acquaintance. If he examines himself closely he will probably discover that he really likes the accepted masterpieces but would not go across the road to see some of the latest productions of pictorial art. So that, as far as the ultra-modern painter goes, the ultra-modern musician is out-of-date. Remembering this the ultra-modern musician should be sympathetic and lenient towards those whom he considers out-of-date, because for all he knows they may be, severally, an ultra-modern poet, an ultra-modern sculptor, even an ultra-modern motorist, men by no means to be despised as back numbers.

There is a good deal heard nowadays of the education of public taste. That is good. But for what are we educating the uncultured? If they love Handel's music, is not that a cultured taste? Is Handel of no importance? Is Mendelssohn a mere charlatan? Is it a sign of mental weakness to enjoy a good tune? From the superior tone adopted by certain critics the answer to these questions would be 'yes,' but reason, backed by sympathy and modesty, gives a very decided 'no!' If to like the present means to despise the

past, then is education of all things most vain and futile. If being musical means to despise Handel and to ridicule Mendelssohn, then being musical is indeed a sad infirmity. Hitherto, when at a dinner party a lady has confessed ruefully to being unmusical, we have turned upon her a sympathetic and wistful smile as if to say 'Never mind, we can't all be so happily gifted.' But if to have a simple taste is deplorable then we should have to alter our manner and when next we hear that plaintive remark 'Alas, I am not musical,' we should have to seize her warmly by the hand saying: 'Madam, I congratulate you upon your great good fortune.'

Indeed, is there not a point beyond which being musical ceases to be a pleasure and becomes a positive inconvenience? Certainly the undeveloped listeners enjoy their favourite pieces more than the highly sensitive listener can. To them their favourites are faultless, nor does a tawdry harmony or a banal rhythm mar their blissful enjoyment. In the second place they are spared many forms of sound-making which are a misery to others. For instance, in church they can listen to a badly trained collection of syrens and hooters without experiencing any physical discomfort, and with even a certain amount of emotional pleasure. The fact that the organist, putting into practice an excellent moral precept, lets not his left hand know what his right hand is doing, causes them not the slightest annoyance.

But since it is our duty to develop public taste the question arises at what point in the development would we cry 'Hold, enough!' Or to put the question in another way—if the unmusical could be rendered musical by a surgical operation, how musical would we wish them to be? Let us suppose that an eminent surgeon has discovered how to treat the nerves of the ear so as to cure the unmusical of their lack of appreciation. Let us further imagine that he has collected twenty children who are all completely unmusical, so unmusical in fact that they can thump out a chord of B flat in the left and a running passage in C major without perceiving anything objectionable, and having collected these twenty children he begins to experiment upon them. He gives them one treatment and lo! a miracle. They can now distinguish consonances and dissonances and can find unfeigned pleasure in the music of Mozart and Handel. Is his work to stop there? Of course not. He gives them another treatment and now they can appreciate the more complicated progressions of Bach and Beethoven. Is not this enough? By no means. A third treatment is given and the children lap up 'Tristan and Isolde' as though it were Benger's Food. Handel now makes them sick and Beethoven causes them severe liver attacks, giddiness and yawning. The children are obviously progressing. But our surgeon must con-

tinue. They have more to learn. He operates again and the children long for Debussy and will not be happy till they get it. Wagner now makes them peevish and irritable. Good! let our surgical friend advance. There is an immense field of music as yet unexplored by these half-developed children. Another operation and they are practically educated. No longer can they tolerate common chords and diatonic discords. Their nerves no longer respond to them. 'Dissonance on dissonance,' they cry. 'Give us some juxtapositions of tonal values,' they whine as they are put to bed. They are now in the stage of being quite unable to distinguish deliberate cacophony from perfect concords. Dissonance is no longer an alternative to consonance, it is consonance. In fact they are now in a state almost equivalent to that from which they were originally rescued by our manipulative surgeon. If anyone thinks this hypothetical development extravagant, let him play through some of Stravinsky's piano pieces *pour cinq doigts* and ask himself how far the finished work of the master differs from what any child without any musical training might strum on the piano.⁽¹⁾

But putting aside the surgical hypothesis, it is permissible, even necessary, that we should consider seriously what we intend and desire by educating public taste. We do not want commercially-minded builders to disfigure our villages with hideous erections, ill-designed and badly built, nor do we want commercially-minded advertisers to mar the beauty of the wayside with screaming advertisements of priceless pills and prosperous journals. And we do want to educate public taste for the appreciation of great art in which is enshrined the souls of men stirred to action by noble thoughts and overwhelming beauty. But where shall we stop? Is it the purpose of education that men shall delight in first, by way of initiation, the sculptures of Michelangelo in order that they may finally delight in the deformities which modern sculptors are placing in the most conspicuous places of our largest cities? Is this the triumph of artistic education? Is it indeed the triumph of the present day universal education that our children shall be able to read stories of murder, theft and obscenity in the columns of the Sunday Press?⁽²⁾ Is it the triumph of musical education that the unmusical shall pass, by way of Beethoven and Mendelssohn, to the appreciation of the purveyor of incessant and meaningless cacophony?

What is the cause of this unfortunate state of affairs in which we have immensely gifted artists and an immense and hungering public

(1) Many years' experience of duffers has led me to see that extremes meet: the gross hearing of the boor and the hyper-sensitive hearing of the master both producing upon the normal listener the same distressing effect.

(2) Another form of Caliban's cynical wisdom: 'You taught me language; and my profit on't is, I know how to curse.'

at loggerheads with one another? Is it not that at the present day the multitude have no means of showing their likes and dislikes? Since the growth of cheap journalism *vox populi* is no longer *vox Dei*, the double rôle being played by the modern critic. What advantage is it to a composer that a thousand people vociferously applaud his new work at Birmingham, if the critics, men whose misfortune it is to have to turn a pleasure into a profession, dismiss the work with contempt because it happens to offer no new thrill to their jaded senses? One hundred years ago if an opera was tumultuously received at its appearance it was a success, to-day such a reception means nothing. The first cause then of the cleavage between the artist and the public is that the critic, whose opinion has a thousand times more weight than any other person's, lives in a state of musical satiety.

The sense of hearing, like any other sense, is one which may be abused. Just as the gourmet has to have his sense of taste tickled by new and expensive experiments in cookery, so the professional listener has to have his hearing tickled by new and extravagant experiments in sound. So continual and so insistent is their demand for highly seasoned sounds, and so contemptuous, so impatient, their ridicule of all that is normal and healthy, that composers have been driven, if they wish to get any respectful notice, to cater not for the many healthy music lovers, but for the few whose voices are heard aloud in the streets.⁽³⁾

To attract notice and to gain a reputation for originality, many composers are forced to write in a style which can only be described as a jargon, that is, they use not the vocabulary of the ordinary man but a vocabulary which is, to borrow a phrase from the half-witted knight, 'all their own invention.' Doubtless the message they give is of great value, its only drawback is that it is meaningless to others. There is a belief among the few that a work which is appreciated only by the highbrows to-day, will become the food of the multitude to-morrow, but history does not bear out this comfortable belief. In the Elizabethan days Ben Jonson was the highbrow, Shakespeare the popular dramatist. It was thought that Ben Jonson would come into his own while Shakespeare would fade into nothingness, but to-day Ben Jonson is still only the idol of learned societies while Shakespeare is a universal possession.⁽⁴⁾

(3) It would be comic, were it not pathetic, to see elderly composers who might have written much good music, deliberately cacophonising their inventions in order to appear up-to-date. It is as distressing as seeing an old lady, who would have been beautiful in old age, painting and rouge-ing herself to appear young.

(4) Contemporary popularity is usually scorned presumably because the artist appears to be appealing to a passing fashion; on the other hand contemporary popularity may be eternal because the artist is entertaining his fellows with fantasies woven out of recurring human experiences, e.g. Sophocles and Aristophanes.

The belief that being modern (which seems to mean the indulgence in cacophony) will earn for a composer a later date halo is not proved by history, for though it is true that Wagner's music which was once considered cacophonous is now considered a classic, it is equally true that Liszt's music which was also considered cacophonous has not reaped a similar reward. Again, Brahms, a contemporary of Wagner, was considered by the 'Musicians of the Future' as a reactionary—a man not to be reckoned with, yet he is now as much a classic as Wagner. It is evident then that it matters little in what particular style a man writes, provided that what he says is of value. What the world requires is great art and it cares nothing about the date of its production. Fifty years, a hundred years, a thousand years do not separate masterpieces, for all great art is contemporary and eternal. Its form may change with climate, its means of expression may alter with dynasties or conquests, but its spirit lives deathless and unchanged. Homer, Virgil, Milton meet as equals, their arrivals on this planet being incidents in the fourth dimension—time. If a man could write a symphony better than Beethoven's Fifth, or a Passion greater than that of Bach, the world in time would prefer his works, because what it seeks is real greatness and the fact that they appeared many years after their prototypes would not affect its judgment. There were doubtless many dramatists before the days of Aeschylus, but their work, however much it was appreciated in its day, has failed to live because it was eclipsed by 'Agamemnon' and 'Prometheus.'

At present, so called modernity in art generally means the exploitation of one or two aspects of each art rather than a fitting together of all aspects of art until the finished work satisfies others than the creator from every point of view. One man specialises in colour, but provides no substance; another specialises in rhythm, but provides no melody; while a third specialises in common chords and provides no rhythm. The result, as far as the ordinary listener is concerned, is as though he were offered cakes made by two eclectic chefs, one adorning his indigestible concoction with beautifully coloured icing, the other mixing his flour with vinegar and salt to get harshness of texture. What the world requires to-day is a great composer, a man equally at home in the world of sound as in the world of men, who shall gather up the various ingredients, which have been developed severally, by ingenious specialists, mixing them into a whole which shall find a response in the hearts of men and women to whom music means something more than jazz and something less than freakishness.

By all means let the composer be original, but let him be original unconsciously, not of malice prepense. Deliberately to adopt an originality of expression means that at any rate the composer has no

message of immediate importance for the world. St. Simon Stylites certainly won for himself a chilly immortality by spending his life on a pillar (an action which may have been born of a desire for solitude, but equally well of a desire for limelight), but it is obvious that he limited his capacity to preach the gospel in a way which would have driven the ardent St. Paul or the Baptist into a frenzy of spiritual anger.

Fortunately it would seem that we have almost exhausted the possibilities of deliberate originality. It is impossible, for instance, to be more discordant than the third of Schönberg's piano pieces, op. 11, or to eclipse the orchestral furies of Stravinsky, or to surpass the harmonious inertia of Vaughan-Williams. It therefore behoves the next generation to rouse themselves to action and to ask themselves how they may bring well made music into line with modern thought and modern desires. When it is necessary let us have all the dissonance of Schönberg, the stridency of Stravinsky, the vagueness of Vaughan-Williams and the voluptuousness of Scriabin, but let us not forget that music has concords as well as discords, that life has its calms as well as its storms, and that there are emotions still as beautiful and sincere as when Jacob served his twice seven years for Rachel, or when Isaac wept for the imagined death of his darling child Joseph.

How is such freshness and simplicity to be attained? That is a question difficult to answer, and the answer if given might not be found practicable. But whether there is an answer or not, it does seem certain that there is a limit beyond which art cannot go unless it go backward. Is it not possible that our ideas of progress are wrong and that the refinements of luxury and sensibility are decadent and unfruitful? Have not the excessively musical among us reached the stage of the overfed gourmet who can find no pleasure in normal food unless it is so spiced, so flavoured or so rotten as to be repugnant to the taste of the healthy man to whom feeding is a necessity not a fine art?

To all these questions each of us can find an answer, though it is probable that none of us would be in total agreement with the answers given by the others.

A. E. BRENT SMITH.

VOCAL AND UNVOCAL

Singers often say that a composer, or song, or a particular passage, is unvocal. I have never seen 'vocality' as such discussed, and to do so might be interesting. Could we arrive at any general principles? A few points follow here by way of defining the question rather than of forestalling the answer.

- (1) Does the being unvocal depend on purely technical points, such as
 - (a) The presence of
 - awkward figures, arpeggios, intricate runs or turns, repeated notes; abrupt, or not readily intelligible, harmonic changes; thick partwriting, contrapuntal effects, or the general predominance of interests other than vocal;
 - awkward tessitura, or uncomfortable length of phrase?
 - or (b) The absence of
 - a definitive bass, a clear 'arch' to the phrase?
 - (2) Is unaccompanied song more vocal than accompanied? Why? or why not?
 - (3) Why is folksong vocal enough, but difficult to sing well?
 - (4) Is 'being vocal' mainly a matter of the words—
 - of getting the right sort of word for a high or low note, and would that be the same for all voices;
 - of the words making good, or desirable sense,
 - of particular vowels or consonants, or juxtapositions;
 - of one language than another?
 - (5) Or is the question of a particular song being vocal a question, at bottom, of the particular singer? Will A (by virtue of his particular training, experience, knowledge or temperament) feel the song to be vocal, and B not? Will a given song seem unvocal at twenty and not at forty, or vice versa?
 - (6) If we say that one composer is more vocal than another, Handel than Bach, Schubert than Wolf, one of our contemporaries than another, or the eighteenth century than the nineteenth, the nineteenth than the twentieth, on what sort of things are those judgments based?
- Short articles on this subject, or on some part of it, were invited, and are printed below: similar ones are now invited for the October number. (They should reach the Editor by August 1.)

THE prefix 'un' being negative, literally speaking, unvocal music should mean that which cannot be sung. The adjective has come to be used, however, of music which is difficult, or ungrateful. We are the slaves of our habits, and speech is our commonest form of expression. Consequently song is easiest when it most resembles speech. Technically speaking, recitative, or *parlando*, where the length and stress of the syllables, the pitch and its rise and fall are approximately the same as in speech, is undoubtedly the easiest and most vocal music. Difficulties begin when song departs from the habits of speech. The differences may be small or great, and art may or may not be able to overcome them. For instance slow and sustained *cantabile* passages, especially when the phrases are long, present difficulties to the beginner, but practice can overcome them.

On the other hand clumsy accentuation and badly distributed syllables must always be unvocal; for, by obscuring the meaning, they prevent the singer from conveying it to the hearer. To the mere sound producer this is of little moment, but to real singers, who receive even more inspiration from the words than from the music, it is a burden, for anything which damps their enthusiasm prevents perfect freedom in breathing. Practice and experience can do a great deal, but breathing, upon which everything depends, is always governed by emotion, even in the case of an accomplished artist.

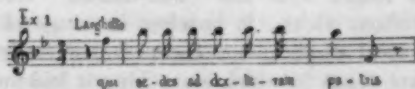
There is another sort of music which is vocal to some and unvocal to others. The *aria di bravura* is quite unlike speech. It treats the voice as an instrument. Singers are like composers, there are few of them whose musical and literary senses are equally developed. When music is top dog *coloratura* is welcome enough. But the really artistic singer believes that the music was written to beautify the words and enhance their meaning, and that the poem, not the music, should have first consideration. Music where the words are obviously treated as pegs on which to hang the notes is anathema to these singers. Unfortunately some singers are very little enthused by either words or music, but only by the sound of their own voices. They naturally choose to sing that which displays the voice to the best advantage, irrespective of the words to which it is set. Incidentally these are the people who oftenest complain of unvocality.

To explain fully the commonest class of unvocal music, it is necessary to understand a little about the voice. High sounds require more breath pressure than others because they are used to express more intense feelings. The highest notes of a man's voice are an octave lower than those of a woman. The 'head notes' of a soprano resonate in the frontal sinuses behind the forehead. The mouth is opened wider to prevent these sounds coming too far forward and resonating in the mouth and nasal cavities. The most forward sound is the hum. The vowel sound most like the hum is *ee*, whilst *ah* resembles it least. Very high sounds are not used in speech, they are only heard in laughter or in a shriek. Song demands that these sounds shall be used for a much larger group of emotions; extreme tranquillity, for instance, is often expressed in music by a *pianissimo* high note. It must be realised that even a tranquil *pianissimo* is intense from the point of view of the singer, though restful to the listener. So long as the words contain vowel sounds favourable to head notes, like *ah*, these can be sung on high notes; but when closed vowels such as *ee* and *oo* occur, these sounds have to be modified and opened gradually from the *F* on the fifth line of the treble stave upwards. Even then they are not always comfortable above *G* sharp, particularly in *forte* and *fortissimo*. A tenor does not use his frontal sinuses for

his high notes. His voice is 'forward' right up to his highest note. Closed vowels are easiest for him, but none present much difficulty. In fact one need not consider the lie of the words in connection with men's voices. Consonants are explosions, varying in energy according to the amount of stress required. They are either explosions of air, as in the case of *t*, *p*, *k*, *f*, *s*, etc., or of sound in the case of *d*, *b*, hard *g*, *v*, *z*, etc. The second class, or the 'voiced' consonants, must have the same pitch as the following vowel, otherwise scooping will ensue. This is a hideous effect caused by sounding the consonant at too low a pitch and then sliding up to the right pitch for the vowel. As head notes require an open mouth, and as *d*, *b* and hard *g* close all passages, these consonants are almost impossible on very high sounds. Further, nature abhors monotony and speech varies continually in pitch. Monotoning and chanting are the two most difficult parts of the church service.

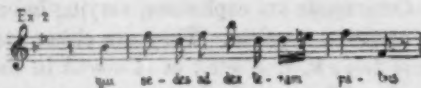
It will be seen from the foregoing that the most unvocal music is that which maintains a monotonously high pitch, and, in the case of women's voices, contains closed vowels and voiced consonants.

Except under stress of great emotion, the speech of the average person is seldom intense. Conversational speech, therefore, varies but little in pitch. Song is, or should be, far more intense than speech, and therefore the variation in pitch is much greater. A teacher of singing, both chorus and solo, is constantly in conflict with people who are not musical enough to feel the intensity that the composer felt. They are always endeavouring to sing white-hot music in the cold blood of conversational speech. Such music is therefore unvocal to them, but not to the artist. If the composer asks for extremes he must feel his climaxes intensely, and even then he must bear in mind the limitations of the voice. The instrumental composer often fails to do this when writing for the voice. Regarding the voice as an instrument, he expects it to perform any note at any strength for any length of time. The result is, that as the music cannot be sung *con amore*, the listener's attention is distracted from it to the uncomfortably forced efforts of the singer. Beethoven amongst the great composers is the worst offender in this respect. The solo and chorus parts of the Mass in D provide numerous examples of what not to do:—



The above extract from the 'Gloria' shows all four difficulties—

monotony, extreme height, closed vowels and voiced consonants. I have had the impertinence to rewrite it thus :—



Here the accented syllables get the high notes, as they do in speech, and the distribution of syllables is more in accordance with their declamation. Instrumentally Beethoven's reiteration of the B flats might produce the greater effect, but try chorus sopranos on his version and mine and observe the difference! The soprano part from the second entry of 'Quoniam tu solus' to the *allegro non troppo* contains 76 crotchets. Of these 19 are sung on high A, 3 on G sharp, 14 on G, 22 on F sharp and 15 on E. Thus for only three beats are the sopranos below E. The Latin vowel i is sung for 26 crotchets, 17 of them on high A. In the next movement Beethoven goes to the other extreme. Nineteen bars before the *più allegro* all four voices are made to attack important leads, the basses and contraltos on low A, the tenors and sopranos on low D. The former pair can manage a fairly strong *mezzo forte*, but the others are either forced in tone, or inaudible. In the 'Credo,' from the *allegretto ma non troppo* onwards the awkward syllables 'et vitam venturi' are given to the unfortunate sopranos four times at a pitch which makes their efforts suggestive of anything but the life of the world to come!

These and other similar passages in the Choral Symphony are the most unvocal things I know. I never hear them without an ache for the singers. My attention is thereby distracted from the music, noble as it is. Awkward intervals, chromaticisms, strange time and rhythm—these can all be learnt by reasonably good musicians with plenty of hard work, but passages like those quoted above can never be anything but a hardship and a nuisance to singers.

The greatest artists in their choice of songs show a predilection for those which are most vocal and least instrumental. That is why they delight in folksong, in the songs of the Elizabethan Lutenists, in Schubert and in all songs where their imagination has perfect freedom. The singer with the 'well-trained' voice of excellent quality, but without vision, is hopeless in songs of this type, for therein is no vocal display, nor cheap drama ready-made. These people must have songs in which everything is laid out for them and in which their own imagination has no part to play.

EDWARD G. BAIRSTOW.

Who is to be the judge as to whether a piece of music is vocal or unvocal? The singer? If so, his verdict will depend on the extent of his own intelligence and technique. Are we to take as our standard Concone's elementary studies or the arias which Mozart wrote for special singers of exceptional skill?

As a general principle I maintain that all composers ought to study the human voice and observe what are its unavoidable limitations in its different types; they ought also to observe the vocal effects which they find by experience of careful listening to be the most beautiful and the most moving. At the same time singers must remember that they are the servants of the composers. They must not condemn a new style as unvocal because it requires them to do something which they have never done before.

In singing, as in instrumental playing, we must distinguish between technical difficulties and intellectual difficulties. Singers accustomed to Handel used to find Bach difficult because Bach's musical thought was unfamiliar. Pianists and violinists of to-day have to play, and do play successfully, passages which a hundred years ago would have been regarded as impossible; the difficulty lies mainly in grasping the intellectual significance of the sequence of notes. Some lie better under the hand than others and perhaps some vocal phrases lie better for the voice than others; but if a singer has worked through all Sir Henry Wood's exercises there can hardly be any series of notes which are unsingable.

(1) (a) Awkward figures, arpeggios, intricate runs or turns and repeated notes are all common features of the Italian arias from Stradella to Rossini. That was supposed to be the age of the great singers—we cannot then dismiss these things as 'unvocal.'

Abrupt or not readily intelligible harmonic changes: assuming that the composer's harmony is sound, it is the duty of the singer to learn to understand it, and to see how he can help to make it clearer. Certain harmonic changes, for instance, require the singer to take a certain note slightly sharper or flatter than it appears to be; unexpected changes from major to minor or *vice versa*, such as occur in Purcell and Bach, require extreme precision of intonation—the singer must, as it were, say to his audience, 'I know you expect B flat here, but the composer has written B natural and it is important that you should recognise the fact.'

Thick partwriting, contrapuntal effects, or the general predominance of interests other than vocal, are matters which belong to composition and musical thought. All these things may be necessary at times to express the composer's meaning. No singer ought to kick against counterpoint, for counterpoint is essentially melodic. But composers ought to understand that counterpoint is of no con-

trapuntal value unless the parts are themselves genuinely expressive. See the fugues in Verdi's 'Requiem' and the fugues in Berlioz's choral works (not the comic *Amen* chorus in 'Faust'!). When the individual parts are in themselves expressive, singers or players will sing or play them with expression, and consequently with much better quality of tone, and this affects the general 'tone-colour' of the music as a whole.

In dramatic music there is often a sound reason for 'unvocal' writing, to give the right expression to some particular dramatic situation.

Tessitura is a very serious matter, and a composer who ignores it is simply a fool.

(b) The absence of a definitive bass is also a composer's matter. He may prefer to write a phrase without a bass; but if he writes a vocal phrase which is musically nonsense for want of a bass to explain it, he is a bad composer, and no singer need bother to learn his music. A phrase of such a kind will be just as bad whether it be offered to a voice or an instrument.

(2) One would think that unaccompanied song ought certainly to be more vocal than accompanied. In practice it is not; in some cases because the composers who attempt to write unaccompanied solo songs do not succeed in writing really interesting music, vocal or unvocal; in others because the singers have been so long accustomed to have half their work done for them by the accompanist that they are incapable of sustaining the interest of a song, even of a simple tune like a folksong, by themselves. There are hardly any singers who understand what it is to practise an accompanied song without accompaniment in such a way as to make it completely intelligible. They expect the pianist to provide the rhythm; they are incapable of maintaining the rhythm by themselves. I do not mean that they cannot sing in time—a few can; I mean that they cannot by themselves keep up the continuous rhythmic force on which any piece of music depends. They regard that as 'not their job' any more than an organist expects to have to blow his own organ.

(3) Folksong is difficult to sing well, because it is a highly artificial thing. It is not natural to any Englishman to sing folksongs. When Mrs. Kate Lee and others started the folksong movement about 1890 English folksong was almost as near extinction as the Erse language. Folksongs had to be collected with endless patience and difficulty from singers who were mostly about 80 years of age. The revival was an entirely deliberate effort on the part of a few enthusiasts. People may possibly have come by now to accept folksongs as national possessions, but for a long time it was as much a

matter of pretence as Marie Antoinette's dairymaiding. Cultivated singers had by dint of technical skill to acquire a style which suggested the manner of the imaginary peasants who ought to have sung folksongs all day by natural instinct, and at the same time to sing their songs sufficiently well (judged by ordinary artistic standards) to make them a success in the concert-room. The amateur understands the spirit of folksong, but does not sing well enough; the ordinary professional regards it as derogatory to try to sing like an amateur. The difficulty of singing folksongs is mainly a matter of self-consciousness, vanity and snobbery.

(4) Teachers of singing often say that a good singer ought to be able to sing any vowel on any note of his voice, but for practical purposes composers ought to know that each type of voice has its peculiarities in this respect. This also applies to people who make translations for singing. On this question translators may be classed with composers.

It is of vital importance that words should make good sense—indeed they should do more than that: they should be something that one can reasonably call poetry. A singer who has to sing a bad translation is constantly hampered in his production by the mere fact of feeling ashamed of the words he sings. If he is so stupid as not to be ashamed of them, he ought to be ashamed of himself.

But it does not follow that words which have a minimum of consonants are necessarily good to sing. Certain phrases demand words with some grits in them, *e.g.*, Beethoven's Choral Fantasia, which sounds paltry and trivial unless the words are strong enough to force singers to take it seriously.

Juxtapositions of words are the affair first of the poet and secondly of the composer. Assuming that the poet knows how to use his own language, it is the composer's duty to set it so as to bring out the words in their right sense and in their right sound and rhythm too. If both do their work properly there ought to be no difficulty for an intelligent singer. But many composers forget one most important fact, *viz.*, that whereas in moments of emotional tension an instrumentalist wants to go faster, or to break into faster notes, a singer wants to go slower and must therefore be given time to expand. The fitting in of these opposite tendencies in composition is a matter of composers' technique and is a perfectly easy thing to do when one knows the way to do it.

Different languages have their different characteristics which affect their poetry, their song-composition and their singing. Singers (and critics too) often express sweeping judgments on the vocal character of a foreign language, but their judgments are of no value whatever

unless they can at least speak the language fluently and with a correct accent. Even then their judgments are not worth much unless they have a considerable knowledge of the poetry of the country concerned.

Many English singers are accused of singing their own language badly. They talk it worse.

(5) and (6) The judgment of most people on these and most other musical matters is based on the fact that they refuse to make any intellectual effort and do not wish to hear any music which they have not heard before.

EDWARD J. DENT.

To myself, this question of the vocal and unvocal would seem to be, in the main, a matter of historical evolution. There have always been types of singers ready to abuse as unvocal anything to which they happen to be unaccustomed, or to reach their own conceptions of the satisfactorily vocal across the prostrate bodies of composer and colleagues. It is of course true that, as Stanford says in his book on Composition, 'mechanical improvements have not as yet found their way into the throat'; but singing is not only a matter of throat-mechanism. It is a mental affair also; and the intelligent singer of to-day has heard a great deal of music, and has unconsciously entered into a larger range of musical thought that helps his throat to do more, and do it more easily, than the throats of his unintelligent predecessors or contemporaries. And this process has always been going on. I do not myself see how the unvocal can be defined except as something that cannot, in its entirety, be performed musically (*i.e.*, as clean sound, not noise), and without verbal violence, by a contemporary singer possessed of intelligence and skill.

Dramatic declamation I should be inclined to leave as a side issue. In the strictest sense of the words (*i.e.*, with the musical element definitely subordinate, and therefore inevitably 'unvocal') it is, I should say, very rarely required in reputable music. If a singer cannot get, in the properly wide sense, beautiful tone to run in harness with any sort of emotional colour that a reasonable listener can ask for, it is merely a deficiency of technique; we know well enough nowadays that Wagner can be sung with as much tonal beauty as Mozart. Wellnigh all of him, that is to say; Mime and Alberich have at times remarks to make where the notes are mere sketches of intonation. And there are such things as, for example, Moussorgsky's 'Flea' song or the queer finale to Wolf's 'Mörkelieder' in which the interviewer is kicked downstairs. 'Vocality,' for every note of

such pages, is a sheer impossibility. But it is only a tiny corner of vocal music.

When, as No. 6 of the questionnaire says, we speak of one composer as more 'vocal' than another, do we not most often mean merely that the relatively 'unvocal' composer is asking his singers to do more—not at all necessarily more than they ought or can? Bach and Wolf require, not infrequently, quite as much *bel canto* as Handel or Schubert. It does not mean, of course, that they are musically greater—that is neither here nor there; but it does mean that to them 'vocality' is a larger thing. Though it is true that some so-called 'unvocal' composers, Delius for example, move in this respect in a technically limited world, though doing something of their own that is well worth doing.

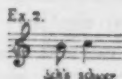
'Awkward intervals,' again; if a singer cannot manage, in the straight smooth melodic flow, such things as the tenths in Schubert's 'Liebesbotschaft,' or the diminished twelfths in Brahms's Alto Rhapsody, then he or she must practise. Or the old bugbear of the augmented second. When, in the crystal-clear four-part harmony of Brahms's early arrangement of the Volkslied 'Sankt Raphael,' we find



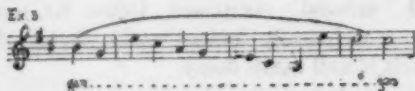
it is obvious that he is primarily concerned with chord-spacing (as in the beautiful consecutive fifths near by). The music, as music, comes first. Though, we must not forget, Brahms was broad-minded enough to say that he did not object to the alteration of his actual notes by a sensible singer (the adjective is of course important) whose individual voice found them inconvenient; presumably he was thinking of such alternatives to exceptionally high or low notes as he himself indicated in the 'Ernste Gesänge.' The singer who will not abuse licence may be given it for the sake of 'vocality'; but the 'vocality' for the sake of which this amount of rope, so to speak, is granted is purely a matter of the physical capacities of the individual; we cannot generalise about it. The voice is the one and only instrument that, in the strictest sense of the word, is unique with each performer; but the composer must necessarily write for the bulk of folk, who have practically always been able, if they will take the trouble, to sing what reputable composers give them.

Practically always: there are exceptions. It seems to me, for

example, in the highest degree improbable that any singer has ever been able to sing these two notes from Brahms's 'Entführung':

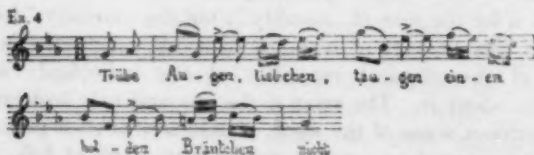


with all the consonants, rhythmically, and *schnell*. Here the 'unvocality' is verbal; in this *prestissimo* alto part from Beethoven's Choral Symphony—



it is due to sheer forgetfulness of the voice *quâ* voice; in the passage from the same composer's 'King Stephen' incidental music, where the sopranos are made to leap from the bottom D straight to the top B and kept hard at work on the latter note and the adjacent A for twenty-two bars on end, it is forgetfulness of *tessitura* and human endurance. Apart from dramatic 'non-singing,' these three kinds of 'unvocality' are, I am inclined to think, the sum total—unless we include choral writing of a type suitable only for solo voices (as symphonic violin music differs from that of concertos), which is possible, though I cannot think of any examples.

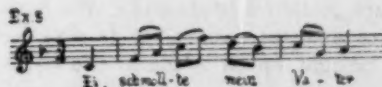
The verbal kind of unvocality seems to me the least important of the three. No one would nowadays assert that a composer's own language, whatever it may be, is, as vocal sound, an unsuitable medium for his musical thought; though no doubt, in translations, some transferences may cause more disturbance of the vocality than others—German is, for example, obviously tonally closer to English than to French or Italian. But musicians generally, I think, turn a blind eye to such misdeeds as Brahms's 'Ich's schwor,' or the wilfully and unnecessarily misaccentuated



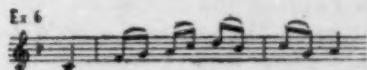
in 'Der Freischütz,' or the (probably merely illiterate) 'virgo virginum præclara' in Dvorak's 'Stabat Mater'; the singers can make the best of a bad job and not worry. In Weber's

tune they will, of course, simply disregard the stresses he so carefully indicates. And, really, do not most of us, with our hands on our hearts, put words very much in the background when fine music is in question? They are of course an element; in a fair percentage of cases an important, in a small percentage a very important, element; but, always, the essence is elsewhere.

The unvocality which assimilates (or confuses) vocal and instrumental styles is a question of degree. The Beethoven passage, and its like, stand, I think, condemned because voices are not, like instruments, capable of impressionistic treatment in bulk: the 'Feuerzauber,' for example, is more than amply justified even though average violinists would probably not much care to play it as a solo. And there are things in twentieth century vocal music that I cannot imagine as ever sounding other than awkward, simply because it is not a question of the singer's technical skill but of the composer's own technical carelessness and lack of discrimination. But we must not go too far in such criticism. Bach's vocal and instrumental techniques meet on very friendly common ground; and all singers of Brahms's 'Des Liebsten Schwur' must be grateful that he did not (as in a nervous moment of unusual concession he was inclined to do) alter the delightful flourish of



to the less 'instrumental' but relatively very tame



Finally, there is *tessitura*. Here we must be careful that our blame falls on the right shoulders; only a few days ago I heard a most artistic singer abuse (quite rightly) the *tessitura* of a song which, unknown to her, a scandalously careless publisher had transposed a full fourth upwards from the original key. Moreover, some odd-looking things in the older classics are explicable as, more or less certainly, written for individual singers with freakish voices. But there is no doubt music, some of it very great music, that in this

respect is badly written and almost inevitably must sound bad. Sometimes, judicious transposition may be a partial, perhaps an entire, cure; otherwise we must put up with it and reflect that 'unvocality' is not, after all, one of the seven deadly sins.

ERNEST WALKER.

Vocality appears to me to be not an absolute, but a relative, quality. We are accustomed to a certain scale and to a certain harmony and we can find our way about that scale and in that harmony with tolerable precision, providing always that the melody is reasonably conjunct. When there is a succession of large intervals to sing, even if they are only a succession of simple intervals, such as the fourths and fifths which occur sometimes in the bass part of Elizabethan vocal music, after a time the machinery of the voice appears to demand a change. When the intervals are harmonically unfamiliar, the voice finds it more and more difficult till at last such passages are condemned as unvocal. Much modern music appears unvocal because singers cannot get hold of any underlying principle of harmony in the music and therefore the succession of intervals is unintelligible to them—they are by no means always wrong and it frequently is the case that the music is unintelligible as music and the notes are scattered haphazard. We have only to look at the folk music of different nations, or to consider plainsong as it appears to one brought up on Anglican church music, to see that what is 'natural' to one is 'unnatural' to another. The plainsong educated voice finds its points of repose and finality where the Dykes-Barnby educated voice seems to find only indeterminacy.

But there are particular voices which seem to have had no difficulty in making these large and awkward jumps—the voices for which Mozart wrote his Fiordiligi aria in *Così fan tutte*, or the Commendatore in the last act of 'Don Giovanni,' or Weber in 'Ocean thou mighty monster.' Were these complained of in their day as 'unvocal'? It was undoubtedly cried up against Wagner, but it was cried up also against S. S. Wesley by his brother church musicians that no choir boy could sing the last quartet in the 'Wilderness,' which is now a commonplace performance in any good choir.

One of the first requisites for an intelligent modern singer is sense in the music and sense in the words. I do not regard the actual vowel sounds or consonants as being of great importance; what is good for one is poison for another, and until we singers can agree on a few fundamental ideas, or state boldly that there are no such fundamental ideas, we had better not launch out on a detailed scheme of

good and bad vowel sounds. Some languages are undoubtedly easier to sing than others for Englishmen, but presumably Italians have a different standard of ease and difficulty.

The actual individual differences of voice make a song which is easy for one voice difficult for another, simply on account of *tessitura*. That is not a question of absolute 'vocality,' but of the individual machinery of the voice; a difficulty which art and good instruction might overcome.

In the questionnaire 1 (a) the phrase 'general predominance of interests other than vocal' is used. That is exceedingly important: the voice *must* be the predominant interest, because it is in a position entirely separate and distinct from the instruments of the orchestra. There are occasions when it can be used 'orchestrally,' but that does not enter into this discussion. The danger is that a composer may have a musical idea and seek to express it in a song, which is an unsuitable medium for it. Consequently the piano part, in which the composer is really interested, becomes the important thing, and the voice is left doing the filling in; or perhaps the idea would better have been carried out by a violin or a clarinet sonata. The notion that the voice must be predominant is not one which enters the head of all composers. It has been wisely said by Professor Donald Tovey that the only markings needed in Bach orchestral parts or vocal scores are solo, ensemble, or tutti. The voice, the solo voice, may take its part in the ensemble, but it is useless to employ it in a tutti.

Thus, to sum up briefly, I believe that 'unvocal' does not mean 'difficult' to sing, but rather 'ungrateful' to sing, because the music does not make its meaning clear, or 'come off' as we should say, or because the music is wrongly 'orchestrated' for the voice. But we are in danger always of thinking wrongly about the unfamiliar. It is not always easy to judge the unfamiliar by the standards of the familiar, we are apt to reject wholesale or to accept wholesale, simply because it is less trouble than to discriminate. Behind much apparently 'ungrateful' music there is a great profundity of musical feeling. An analogy with literature suggests the names of Browning and Meredith as two whose thoughts sometimes fought against their means of expression, whereas Anatole France or Flaubert seem to have fashioned their thought in terms of their expression, so perfect is the blend between them. At the other end come Gertrude Stein and her 'expressionist'—if that is the right term—contemporaries. Are they struggling to express a thought that is really worth while, or is the only interesting thing about them the contortions the mountains go through in the process of delivery of their mouse?

STUART WILSON.

The question here proposed has many aspects; it may be well to begin with the historical—first, because this is the usual method, secondly, because a glance at history is indispensable to the consideration of Nos. 1, 3 and 6 of the present questionnaire.

Mme. Mara, after singing the soprano part in 'The Creation' (in 1800) remarked, huffily, it was the first time in her life that she had been asked to accompany an orchestra. This is, I believe, the earliest recorded protest of a singer against the 'unvocal' quality of a vocal composition; the first reasonable protest, that is to say, for it is probable that Cuzzoni's refusal to sing a song as Handel had written it was mere vanity—for her, an 'unvocal' piece meant one that gave little opportunity for the display of her own peculiar powers. But Mara's grumble was reasonable enough at the time; in comparison with any to which she had been accustomed, Haydn's score was undeniably heavy. Yet her grievance might have been urged with still greater plausibility some 200 years earlier. I do not know if any of the singers in Caccini and Peri's 'Euridice' performed in 1600, and generally referred to as 'the first opera,' were engaged for Monteverde's 'Orfeo' in 1607; if so, they must surely have rebelled on finding that the 'orchestra,' which in the case of 'Euridice' consisted of four performers, was now increased, only seven years later, to the number of 40.

Since Mara's day the charge of 'unvocality' on the same ground—i.e., too much orchestra—has been of course constantly repeated, and with greater justice. We all know how it was prophesied that Wagner's music must inevitably end in ruining the voices of those who attempted it; in the case of Wagner that charge is now rarely heard, but I doubt if a singer exists to-day who would maintain that the music of, say, 'Elektra,' was exactly vocal.

My illustrations, it will be seen, have so far been drawn chiefly from the field of opera, since opera has always been the school, the goal, the temple, of all the greatest singers; and here there can be no doubt that the 'predominance of interests other than vocal' (see No. 1 (a)) did, after the arrival of Wagner, increase to such an extent as seriously to damage the art of song, and to threaten for a time the supremacy of the singer on the operatic stage. There are welcome signs that the danger is passing, the pendulum swinging in the opposite direction. We have come to demand that Wagner, even in his most strenuous moments, shall be sung, not shouted; we no longer guffaw over Bellini and the 'early Verdi'; some even cast a longing eye in the direction of Handelian opera. All this is to the good. But suppose the backward revolution set in, and revivals of eighteenth century opera were seriously attempted, it is to be feared that the singers of to-day would find grounds for grumbling every

whit as valid as Mme. Mara's, though of a totally different kind—the music of the great age of 'vocalism,' an age when composer and librettist alike were concerned chiefly to satisfy the demands of the singers, would seem to them 'unvocal.' The works of Porpora, Hasse, and their like, who divided their time between the training of vocal prodigies and the writing of operas to suit them, contain page after page of music which would be beyond the powers of any singer of the present day. We may imagine a modern Beckmesser (preferably female) shut in the 'Marker's' cabinet to judge, from the singer's point of view, the performance of one of these pieces of florid vocalisation which were meat and drink to the eighteenth century singer; 'intricate runs,' 'repeated notes,' 'awkward *tessitura*,' 'uncomfortable length of phrase'—scratch! would go the relentless chalk at each one of these, and the final verdict would be: 'unvocal! impossible!'

I have said enough, I hope, to show that in the matter of technique, the use and meaning of the word 'unvocal' must necessarily alter with the period, and hence is to some extent a matter of musical history.

Question 3 is also, to my mind, connected with the flight of ages. The reason why folksong is 'difficult to sing well' is that we have lost the æsthetic innocence necessary for the rendering of such simplicities—to sing folksong well, we must become again as little children. But in saying this we pass from the field of technique into the realm of psychology, to which questions 2, 4 and 5 in part belong.

Question No. 2.—Unaccompanied song should, in the natural order, be the most vocal of all; if in the present age we find it exceedingly difficult, it is because we have so long been accustomed to go on crutches. Yet we have still among us a body of singers—the true devotees of plainsong—who find unaccompanied singing essentially 'vocal'; for them it is the right, the easy, the only way.

Questions (4) and (5) need hardly be dealt with in detail; lazy, ignorant, or incompetent singers would doubtless excuse their own shortcomings by answering many an item in the affirmative, but I do not think we should pay any attention to those ill-graced performers who demand 'the right sort of word for a high or low note,' who on passing beyond the soprano (or tenor) F, ignore the existence of any vowel but a mummy form of 'ah,' and call a song 'unvocal' because its final syllable ends with a consonant.

Bad words, it is true, can make the best music 'unvocal,' or even unsingable—witness so many of the 'English versions' of foreign songs and operas which are still tolerated among us. Putting aside the more obvious faults of crude expression, clumsy wording, or sheer

nonsense, that too often occur, there are other and subtler defects which are equally fatal. Unless the verbal rhythm corresponds exactly with the vocal phrase, bending and swaying, rising and falling, with every curve of the music—unless, in short, the words fit the music like a glove, the song is the despair of the artist, and he will have none of it.

Unfortunately, it is only the vocal artist who is thus affected; such distortions of the laws of rhythm, appealing as they do to the intellectual rather than the technical sense, pass apparently unnoticed by the majority of singers.

PAUL ENGLAND.

Vocality is almost entirely dependent on perfection of technique. There probably never has been, and never will be, a singer who commands a complete and perfect technique. I have known many great singers (in the great sense of the word) with a splendid technique, who could yet never master this or that particular branch of it—it might be a fast legato scale, or running passage, or the trill—and years of endeavour have never solved their particular problem. Some fine singers have even found it difficult to sing in concerted numbers. So I think we must recognise it as an undoubted fact that vocality depends largely on technique.

As the 'arch' of the phrase has to be constructed by the singer himself, the making of it vocal or not depends entirely on the way he builds it. Accompanied and unaccompanied song are equally vocal, though the former is easier of performance. I do not agree that folksong is difficult to sing. On the contrary, to the interpretative artist, it is one of the easiest forms of song. A folksong has usually one note to a syllable, and the first essential is the telling of the story. It requires a perfect legato and a continuous unbroken melodic line, *plus*, of course, vision and the power of interpretation. To the complete artist this is child's play. To the mere vocalist (horrid word!) good folksong, or, indeed, any other form of interpretative word, is a sealed book.

I think most singers will agree that certain vowels, and even consonants, are difficult to negotiate in the high register of the voice. I know of one song that ends on a long high C on the vowel *ee*. How many sopranos can sustain a pure *ee* vowel sound on that note? Of course we must call that unvocal.

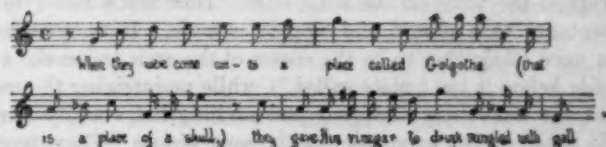
Many composers have little knowledge of the art of singing (a great pity this) and keep the singer for a prolonged period in a trying part

of the voice without allowing him any relief by bringing him down into a comfortable position. They do not know that they can wear a tenor voice to tatters by keeping him too long on E, F and F♯. I could name one great modern English composer who is apt to do this and then, when he has thoroughly tired out his poor artist, finishes him off with a long sustained A or B♭. No singer ought to be compelled to work like a cart horse in order to satisfy the demands of a composer who is not, perhaps, aware of the limitations of the human voice. But here again it is obviously a question of the complete mastery (or not) of the singer's technique.

I suppose all singers will be in accord with me when I say that some composers are easier to sing than others. Any song that sweeps along in broad phrases of small intervals is easier to sing than one that has many intervals of a sixth or an octave (or even a tenth). Handel, in his sustained melodies, revels in phrases consisting mainly of tones and semitones ('Ombra mai fu,' 'He was despised,' for instance), but it is only the singer who can maintain his (or her) *sostenuto*, and who can phrase, that can do such songs anything like justice.

In his recitatives Handel used long intervals very sparingly and they are invariably vocal. Of a different order altogether is such a part as the 'Narrator' in Bach's 'St. Matthew Passion.' The mastery of almost every kind of singing is called for in the interpretation of this rôle. Of course, we all know it lies high and is beyond the reach (in all respects) of a great many tenors, but we must not, simply for that reason, call it unvocal. This narrator part has been condemned so often as the most difficult part in any oratorio that I am constrained to press my point that a proper mastery of a singer's technique will render its difficulties practically negligible. Much of it is as vocal and grateful to sing as anything that has ever been written, and I need only mention 'Peter's denial' and 'Now from the sixth hour' to prove that point. The main story, however, as told by the narrator, is treated in pure recitative in quite a different manner from such sections as those and not a bit like Handel. Bach thinks nothing of leaping up and down the scale in long intervals.

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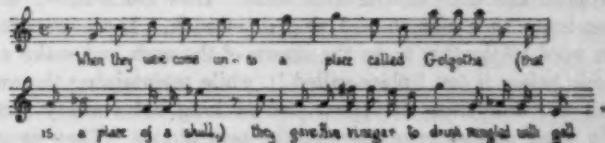
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Just look at the Golgotha section, of which I will quote a few bars,



Now that, to the eye, appears to be as unvocal as anything can well be, but, if the singer's technique is equal to maintaining an unbroken melodic line, all the difficulties disappear and each section will form a complete and vocal whole.

Let us discuss briefly the necessary means towards this end. What must and what must not be done? What do we mean by the maintenance of a melodic line? Does it not mean that the arch of the phrase is paramount and must be maintained against all the obstacles that may be encountered in the course of its progress?

There is a tendency on the part of singers to sing their high notes louder than their low ones. Such a practice is the death of phrasing and destroys the evenness of the melodic line.

Another thing to be avoided is the dropping of the voice on the small words and syllables and on the short notes. I cannot stress this point too strongly, for on the singing of those small syllables and those short notes depends the perfection of the phrase-arch. Why should we spoil the *shape* of a beautiful phrase simply because of the advent of a few small notes and small syllables. It is wrong on the face of it. They are often called 'unimportant' syllables. Believe me, they are nothing of the kind. They must be sung for all they are worth and as being of the utmost importance. Continuity depends entirely on their importance equally with the big words.

Another common practice, too, is that of always making a *crescendo* in an ascending passage and a *diminuendo* in a descending one. Let us get it out of our minds that a high note is more important than a low one. Such an idea is as absurd as the reverse would be.

Then, the pernicious misuse of the *portamento*. What an epidemic of this disease is raging at the moment! Some singers appear to be incapable of singing a descending interval without a horrible slur. It is the cheapest and easiest performed stunt in the repertoire and will reduce temperament to gush. No good singer should indulge in it except as an embellishment—never as a habit. Once, when we were discussing this, Sims Reeves laid down this rule, 'One *portamento* in a song, never more.' When I told Santley that, he said, in his usual gruff manner, 'And that's once too often.'

Now, to return to that Bach recitative, is it not obvious how absurd it would be (and how unvocal) if we accented the big words and dropped the voice on the little ones. How much better to treat each sentence as a phrase and sing it as such. If we consider the biggest word (Golgotha) to be the crown of the arch and make a little *crescendo* before it (on 'place called'), while maintaining the melodic line, all the difficulties disappear and nothing but vocality remains, and the same applies even more to the next phrase 'They gave Him

vinegar to drink mingled with gall.' To hammer out the big syllables 'vin-', 'drink-', 'ming-', 'gall-', simply makes gibberish of it, while if the whole is treated as a musical phrase, with a perfectly graduated *crescendo* up to the word 'mingled' and then an equally perfect *diminuendo*, we find a beautifully vocal thing instead of a series of stresses, and (not an unimportant thing this) every syllable will easily be heard, and cannot help being heard.

To sum up, are we not right in concluding that it is up to the singer, by reason of the mastery of his technique, to make a song vocal or the reverse? Are we not right in assuming that, given an unbroken melodic line, with every note and every syllable put into its proper place in the scheme of the phrasing, the word 'unvocal' may disappear entirely from the singer's vocabulary.

H. GREGORY HAST.

The complaint that certain works are wholly or partly unvocal is evidence of a certain amount of prejudice and loose thinking.

There are certain questions in the Editor's few points printed at the head of these articles which appear to get down to the bedrock of the subject in a remarkably penetrating manner, and a good deal of the ground can be cleared in their dispassionate examination.

Does 'being unvocal' (in the sense of the singer's complaint) depend on technical matters? No 'honest workman' singer could say 'yes' to this. The figures may be awkward, the runs long and intricate, turns are frequently very difficult, the partwriting may be thick, all the horrors mentioned in the Editor's first paragraph may be present (or absent), but there is an answer to all such complaints: that the singer, equally with all other executant musicians, is bound to acquire a technique ample and sufficient for all the requirements of his particular job. He—which always includes she—must be equal to the negotiation of awkward figures, intricate runs or turns and repeated notes; he must find a means of bringing some appearance, at least, of comfort into his singing of long phrases and he must stick to the pure line of his voice part however small its relative importance, however subordinate it may be to harmonic interests, or left in the air without harmonic support, and even if the dramatic or emotional exigencies of the moment leave the phrase without a clear arch.

As to words, they are the singer's crowning mercy: they make of his art something more than music and more than poetry; they exalt it above the mere playing of abstract music upon an instrument (which though extraordinarily sensitive is still very restricted in range); they give it a definite appeal to both intellect and emotion.

To protest that it is not always possible to sing the right word on the right note cannot be contemplated. To say, for instance, that a more beautiful tone can be obtained on the note *E* on the vowel *a* than on the vowel *e* would be a denial of the singer's birthright, his priceless privilege of words, would put the tickling of the ear above the stimulus of the imagination, would exalt the flesh above the spirit.

Unaccompanied song is only in its literal and archæological sense more vocal than accompanied. Unaccompanied song, in the musical sense, merely means that the setting which gives the atmosphere, beautifying and illustrating the poetic basis of the song, is lacking and only the naked story, told with musical inflections of the voice, remains. This is not to say that there may not be poetic beauty in the work, but that as music it is incomplete.

Folksong is difficult to sing well because of what was called, just now, loose thinking and prejudice on the part of singers; and consideration of this point may lead to the right answer to the question of how much there is in the complaints that certain works are unvocal.

If a work is really unvocal, and not merely said to be, it is also unmusical. It is then outside the pale and we have no concern with it. Apart from purely individualistic complaints which though invalid may deserve some sympathy by reference to what follows, perhaps the main causes for the relative frequency of the complaints are these :—

(1) Notwithstanding the peculiar personal sensitiveness of the vocal instrument it appears to be inevitable in dealing with vocal works that a somewhat arbitrary classification of voices into comparatively few groups, based upon vocal compass, must be set up. The effect of this is that composers necessarily write for the voice in terms of these classifications in almost the same manner as they write for other classes and varieties of instruments, and that all singers of the same classification are expected to sing well all the works written for that class. It thus happens that A complains that a certain work is unvocal because the awkwardness of its *tessitura* makes it difficult or impossible for him to sing it well, and he may be so far justified in his complaint in that a hundred other singers of his class will endorse it. But there may be other singers of the same general class with voices poised slightly higher or lower than A's who find no difficulty in singing it well, and make no complaint of its being unvocal. This physical fact will not prevent people from expecting A to be able to sing the work, nor excuse him for not singing it well, if in deference to what is expected of him he attempts the work against his better judgment.

(2) There is the special position singers occupy in the general public view. They are looked upon to a certain degree as exceptional persons possessed of a particular physical quality of an abnormal kind which they are expected to display to its fullest extent, with the result that the purely instrumental side of singing has been given undue importance. In the general public view it is not enough for the singer merely to do his part in a work for voice and accompaniment (the very choice of the word accompaniment in this connection implies this exaggerated view of the relative importance of the voice part); he must dominate the work whatever its character and thus it has come about that in deference to public opinion, he, reasonably enough, regards it as essential that in whatever vocal work he may be engaged he must do what is expected of him and make a good vocal effect. It is because of these considerations alone that folksong—so vocal as it is—is said to be difficult to sing well. The sincerity and perfect simplicity which are required here, the complete absence of any shade or thought which may divert attention from the song to the singer, are a denial of this popular conception of vocal art. A great amount of prejudice would have to be overcome before the peculiar beauty of truly chaste renderings of folksongs could gain popular appreciation, and it is not unlikely that such a performance given by a 'popular' singer to an audience of his admirers would lead them to think that his powers were failing him,

And (3) the high pitch under which singers in this country are condemned to suffer. This is a very real and legitimate grievance which, however, one gathers, is being looked into by highly competent authorities with understanding of singers' needs and sympathy with their distresses. One may therefore hope to see this grievance redressed some day, and then appreciably less will be heard of works being unvocal.

Perhaps it all comes to this, that most of these problems of vocalicity are due to a limited conception of what is song. Song is not merely instrumental music. It is poetry allied to music; it tells the story—so much of it as may be told in words—while within it and underneath it is the expression of the inarticulate which is pure music. When this is universally realised and every singer can dare to take upon himself the dignity of his true vocation, when he can dare say that some of Hugo Wolf's phrases are more truly song than Schubert's, his values will all be changed, and complaint will cease.

OWEN COLYER.

MOZART AND GLUCK*

BY THE LATE HERMANN ABERT

IN Handel, Gluck and Mozart eighteenth century Germany gave to the musical drama its three greatest masters. It is all the more surprising that to this day so little is known even in their native land of their relationship to one another and the real character of their greatness. The only excuse that we can plead is that musical research is still in its infancy. Handel is in the worst case. For many years we knew nothing of his work beyond some half-dozen oratorios—on the strength of which he was reckoned quite erroneously as a church composer of the Bachian stamp—and it is only quite recently that the principles of his dramatic and operatic technique have been rescued from the lumber-heap of oblivion. So far, however, no one has taken the trouble to trace individually the very palpable threads that run from Handel to Gluck. At first sight our knowledge of the relationship between Gluck and Mozart may seem more adequate. Both have found numerous biographers—Mozart a model biographer in Otto Jahn—who have dealt more or less fully with this very point. But there is something unsatisfactory about their treatment, and one can truthfully say that a clear, and, what is all-important, a historically accurate account of this relationship is still to seek.

The mistakes that have been made spring from three sources. The least serious is that common human weakness which leads the biographer to exalt his hero above all competitors in order to place him in the brightest possible light. Much more serious is the dangerous temptation to develop such comparisons into judgments of value, which result in labelling one master as 'the greater,' the other as the 'less great' of the two. This is bad history as well as doubtful justice. The very fact that such preferences inevitably reflect the latest fashion in musical opinion, whose criteria may well prove as unacceptable to subsequent generations as they would have done to the contemporaries of the composers in question—this fact alone is enough to raise our gravest suspicions. The musicologist must never forget that in criticising some piece of music of the past he should be guided not by what we of to-day find pleasant or unpleasant in

* This essay was contributed to the 39th Annual Report of the Mozarteum (Salzburg, 1927), and is here translated by kind permission of the Salzburg authorities and of the writer's widow.

it, but simply by the data given him by the time and place of its composition and the personality of its composer. In the case of Gluck and Mozart, in particular, it is well for us to remember that the question 'What is an opera?' cannot be answered in general terms for all ages and all composers, but only specifically and for each generation in turn. The third source of error is to be found in the fact that the older biographers were not sufficiently acquainted with the historical sources either of Gluck's art or of Mozart's to make a correct comparative estimate of their importance. If they had been, they would have been bound to recognise that Mozart and Gluck were really poles asunder. Historical parallels are only fruitful when the historian both possesses full and accurate knowledge of the two persons compared and is able to specify the barriers that divide them as well as the links that bind them.

From his very earliest years Mozart came frequently into contact with Gluck in the course of his artistic career, and later in Vienna got to know him personally. The course of their relationship was to some extent disturbed by the stubborn paternal pride of Leopold Mozart, who always treated Gluck with a curious mixture of respect and jealous distrust. Mozart himself did not share these narrow suspicions, but all the same he never succeeded in ridding himself of a certain reserve in his attitude towards the older master. Leopold's suspicion that Gluck, seeing in Wolfgang a dangerous rival, was playing a double game with him, is sufficiently refuted by our knowledge of Gluck's character, which was self-assured and downright enough, but wholly free from petty vanity. Moreover Gluck knew nothing of Mozart's later than 'Die Entführung,' and that, as he told Mozart himself, had favourably impressed him. But what after all had Gluck, with whose fame the world had long resounded, to fear from this 'singspiel,' which belonged to a class far below his own great music dramas, and at the time had enjoyed no such success as theirs? It is as though a hundred years later Wagner had felt it necessary to intrigue against Lortzing because he imagined him to be his rival. 'Figaro' and 'Don Giovanni' Gluck did live to see, but sickness had then left him in body and mind a broken man.

Mozart's various criticisms of Gluck's art, which cannot be quoted in detail here, have a curious air of restraint. It is true he was all his life a sharp critic of his contemporaries: the temperamental outbursts of eulogy so familiar in the case of other artists were the exception with him. But when we think of the cordial recognition he bestowed on Johann Christian Bach or Holzbauer we cannot help asking why he felt so coolly for such a man as Gluck, whose superiority to those masters he of all people cannot have helped perceiving. What most attracted him in Gluck's music was, on his

own avowal, his choral writing—an isolated feature, that is, of his musico-dramatic art. Of the æsthetic aims of Gluck's music-drama, on the other hand, there is not a word anywhere in Mozart's letters. We get the unmistakable impression that in his heart he felt no sympathy with them, indeed, that he did not even understand them, and that thus the main link that would have bound him to Gluck was wanting. Mozart, honest realist that he was, never played the hypocrite, and we may accept the judgments that occur in his letters as decisive evidence that the two masters were moving in two different worlds. In Christian Bach, Schobert, Piccini, Paesello and others Mozart recognised reflections of certain aspects of his own nature, but the threads that connected him with Gluck were few and slender.

This is not to say that Mozart's art remained wholly free from traces of Gluck's influence. In fact we find them present in a greater or less degree from the period of his youthful works to 'Idomeneo,' and thence to the supernatural scenes of 'Don Giovanni,' and the choruses of the priests in 'Die Zauberflöte,' the predominant rôle being played by one particular work of Gluck's, the 'Alceste,' Mozart's preference for which is greatly to his credit. But there is never anything more than purely musical reminiscences, or at the most a utilisation of particular types of dramatic scene favoured by Gluck. A genuine music drama of the Gluck pattern Mozart never attempted. During his long stay in Paris, J. G. Noverre, the 'Gluck of the Ballet,' sought to convert him to the style, and seemed at first to be succeeding, but Mozart's short-lived efforts came to nothing, not so much through any external obstacles as from his own personal reactions. In fact, except in the case of 'Titus,' whenever Mozart found that a work on which he had embarked was not in harmony with his peculiar genius he abandoned it without more ado.

It is from this standpoint that we should approach 'Idomeneo,' in particular—that stand-by of all those who would like to see in Mozart a disciple of Gluck, not to say the completer of Gluck's ideals. This opera, the product of what we may term the 'Sturm und Drang' period of its creator, is undoubtedly a real work of genius in so far as it strikes notes of passion never heard before, but a music drama of the Gluck stamp it certainly is not. True it contains certain passages, such as the storm at sea, the scene of the priests and other choruses, whose music would have been inconceivable if Gluck had never existed, but the whole design and treatment of the action and the characterisation of the personages point clearly enough to another model, one on which Gluck had declared war to the knife—Italian *opera seria*. 'Idomeneo' belongs, in fact, to that fairly numerous

class of works which attempted to modernise the old Italian opera by the admixture of French and 'Gluckian' characteristics. Exactly the same may be said of 'Titus': here, too, the occasional touches of colour from Gluck's palette must not blind us to the fact that the whole is essentially a genuine *opera seria*. Both are works to which it is not difficult to find parallels in the nineteenth century. I refer to those numerous operas which for all their reminiscences of Wagner, at bottom sail contentedly along the old, old course.

From all this we can see clearly enough that Gluck's dramatic ideal diverged so sharply from Mozart's that it was quite impossible for the two to coincide. Gluck as the John the Baptist and Mozart as the Messiah of the music drama—the comparison is specious, but it is weak in both its terms. We cannot even acquiesce in the oft made assertion that Mozart was the more inventive, the more 'musical,' of the two. The mere fact that in his Italian period Gluck displayed a creative power which in extent and depth was in no way inferior to Mozart's is enough to refute it. From the time of 'Orpheus' onwards his actual productivity decreased, but that was not from any failing of the power of musical creation, but was due to a fundamental change in his general views about music and the drama. And here we come to the kernel of the whole matter.

In addition to his musical genius Gluck was gifted with an acute intelligence, to which his education under the Jesuits at Komotau had given consciousness of aim and direction. The result was that he became one of the most fervent disciples of the *Aufklärung*. As such he was the very man for *opera seria*, and it was not long before he was rightly regarded as one of its most successful exponents. For this form of art was at bottom a characteristic product of that movement, for whose leading spirits, an aristocratic group of cultured people who took their cue from the court and nobility of France, it chiefly catered. Hence that regularity in the choice of subjects and motives and even in formal structure, that often strikes us as so stiff and monotonous; hence its horror of the irrational, its preference of the rhetorical to the poetic, its fondness for the grand gesture; hence, above all, its attitude to the human individual, so different from that of modern drama. In *opera seria* man as an individual is of no account: he is merely the mouthpiece of something above and beyond him, a universal, a type. He embodies some definite characteristic, whose good or evil consequences are to be made clear to the intelligence: of character, in the modern sense, he shows not the slightest trace. These characteristics, moreover, are themselves confined within the limits of the aristocratic circle of ideas and are all embodiments of those sentiments of heroic gallantry which befitted the world of the court. Everything that smacked of 'the mob,' that is, of the people and its art, was strictly tabooed.

But with this attitude there also went a completely different conception of the relations between art and nature. With anything instinctive, elemental, original, art of this sort had no concern. Direct expression of feeling it regarded as sheer naturalism, only to be rendered artistic by the subtlest stylisation. In the whole history of art the problem of the relation of art to nature has never been settled so one-sidedly in favour of the former, as in *opera seria*. This is the explanation of many of the characteristic features which are apt to seem affected and unnatural to us to-day. The great part played by the castrati, coloratura, the tyranny of the da capo aria, these very restrictions compelled the composer to keep to the matter in hand and saved him from running off into the extravagant and naturalistic. There were thus sound reasons for all these peculiarities and they are certainly not to be explained away with the usual gibes at the vanity of the singers and the wilfulness of the composers.

This tendency to exaggerated stylisation was, of course, at once doomed when, with the dethronement of rationalism, the emotions, so long suppressed, began to clamour for their rights, and at the same time a new conception of nature came into being. The age of Rousseau saw a general assault upon the traditions of *opera seria*. There were, it is true, numerous efforts at compromise, which sought to pour the new wine into the old bottles, but in the end they only showed that wine and water can never mix. The new music might occasionally be fitted to the old formulæ, but anyone who wished to do thorough justice to the new ideas was compelled to alter the formulæ and not merely the music.

It is Gluck's merit that he recognised this and acted upon it. His reform was far from being purely musical, but at the same time it was not merely textual: it was rather dramatic. Its starting point was an entirely new conception of nature and human life. By nature had previously been understood only what chimed in with the views of high society; for Gluck it was the universal and eternal voice of humanity. This breach with the old operatic convention was his greatest achievement. It led at once to the most important consequences. The whole artistic apparatus of the old opera had to go, its complicated system of intrigue with its purely intellectual appeal, as well as its stilted sentiment that only occasionally betrayed a trace of real feeling. In their place a full stream of genuine though grave and dignified emotion flooded the stage, and the ethical implications of the dramatic action were developed in a style of monumental simplicity and homogeneity, unencumbered by subordinate episodes and the complications of intrigue. The action of Gluck's 'reformed' operas no longer had reference merely to polite society: it appealed to all mankind and gave expression to the eternal and unchanging

experiences, conflicts and dreams of the human heart. The individual, it is true, even now did not acquire the privileges which he enjoys to-day: in this respect Gluck remained as much an apostle of reason as he had been before. But he raised his status from that of an embodiment of some fixed and conventional character-type to that of an interpreter of the feelings and thoughts of common humanity, showing, for example, ideal love triumphing over the powers of death, or, as in the character of Agamemnon, the conflict between a father's love and duty towards God.

Gluck's rationalism also showed itself in the marked ethical tone of his dramas and in the manner of their conception. It was always Gluck the thinker who spoke the first and the decisive word. By dint of the most strenuous mental exertion, which sometimes seriously affected his health, he worked his way into the heart of his subject, turning it over in his mind until he had exhausted all its possibilities. In this often very wearisome labour there was as yet no question of poetic or even musical activity. Then came consultations with the librettist about the formal lay-out of the work, which had at all costs to be 'suitable for music,' that is, to consist of a limited number of dramatic scenes, highly charged with emotion. The musician came last of all. He was, like the poet, the executive agent of Gluck the thinker. It is true that he received from the poet a text most carefully adapted to the genius of his own art, from which everything 'unmusical' had been ruthlessly excised, but all the same he was confined by the poet to a definite line of route and had to avoid at all costs any autocratic display of his art. 'The poet provides the drawing, the musician the colouring,' he used to say, and also required that the composer should write so clearly and so unambiguously that any other setting of the words than his would be practically inconceivable. All the irrational impulses of musical creation were thus tabooed; he expected his music to produce the most profound effect, but only as the handmaid of a text inspired and approved by Gluck the thinker. His music-drama was thus an art inspired by the highest ethical ideals, charged with emotion and carried through with all the clear-sightedness of a mature intelligence. We must never forget that it was the work of a man nearly fifty years old.

Mozart's art, on the other hand, followed another direction from the very beginning. His very birth occurred at a time when the prestige of the *Aufklärung* was already dwindling. In his father, it is true, he still had to face one of its staunchest adherents, but it was just this fact which made it inevitable that sooner or later they would drift apart. Even as a boy Mozart showed a continually increasing tendency to shake himself free of the network of rationalism which his father had spread about him, and later the gulf between their

artistic ideals became more and more marked. For the father, as for all the rationalists, art, like other activities, had a definite aim; namely to exercise, instruct and elevate the spirit—and at the same time to contribute to the worldly prosperity of the artist. The latter could, moreover, summon or dismiss the Muse just as his own whim or circumstances dictated. Wolfgang, however, composed because he had to, from the sacred inner compulsion of the creator, which reckes nothing of aims or worldly goods. He was, it is true, a realist as much as his father, but in a much deeper sense. Everything abstract or metaphysical was to him 'sound and fury': anything that could not be apprehended by the artist's vision or fashioned by the artist's hand was for him simply non-existent. While the spirit of Gluck the thinker kept soaring into more and more distant realms of the ideal, Mozart's kingdom—until 'Die Zauberflöte'—remained this solid earth of ours, with its myriad ever-changing phenomena. It is this characteristic that forms the spiritual link between Mozart and Goethe.

But an artist of this stamp was unfitted for *opera seria* from the very start. For Mozart's aim was not in the least to improve men or to convert them, but to exhibit the inexhaustible richness of human life, without any admixture of other-worldly ideas or posing of problems. Accordingly the men and women he brings upon the stage are not character-types as in *opera seria*, nor, except in 'Die Zauberflöte,' the vehicles of ethical ideas, as with Gluck, but isolated phenomena, unique combinations of particular spiritual forces whose lively interplay in the individual and the group determines the character and the fortune of the persons swayed by them. This new and unprecedented art of individual human portraiture, of which the combination of tragic and comic elements for which Mozart is so famous was a natural off-shoot, constituted a revolution which was no whit less important than Gluck's reforms, but was the outcome not of long reflection but of simple artistic intuition.

It was not purely by chance that Mozart's first important dramatic contribution, *La finta semplice*, was in *opera buffa*. This type of opera, ultimately derived from the old Italian *commedia dell' arte*, had come to be more and more the rallying-point of the opponents of the excessive stylisation of *opera seria*. The latter was assailed at all points in a spirit of self-conscious naturalism. In *opera buffa* the composer was not tied down to solo songs, there were no castrati, no coloratura, no tyranny of the *da capo arie*. True this art-form, like its rival, did not work with individuals but with types, the character-masks made familiar by the *commedia dell' arte*, but these types were not intellectual constructions but embodiments of the peculiarities of definite classes of society—soldiers, scholars, shop-

keepers—or particular nations and races, and so taken from the world of everyday life. These were caricatured in the best Italian style, the self-conscious soldier, for example, becoming a wordy braggart and the learned scholar a conceited or crabbed pedant.

After caricature it was the realistic comedy of situation that grew to be the soul of *opera buffa*. The dramatist who succeeded in keeping the public in fits of laughter for a whole evening was straightway pardoned all offences against morality, theatrical illusion and common-sense. By Mozart's time, at the hands of masters like Piccini and Paisiello, this art of sparkling wit and bubbling humour had attained to heights which could hardly be surpassed. It would be a great mistake to think that Mozart simply carried on where the Italians left off. It is not in the nature of genius to repeat, even in an altered form, what has already been achieved, but rather to fashion something fresh. So it came that Mozart took over from the Italians all their liveliness and richness of formal device, but with this material built an entirely new structure which bears throughout the traces of his own character, and, as a matter of fact, has remained unintelligible to the Italians to the present day.

What then was Mozart's general attitude to opera? His alleged carelessness in the choice of libretti, is, in spite of Wagner, a mere legend that has long been exploded by the known facts of Mozart's life and his critical attitude towards his poets. It is true that he did not choose his texts in accordance with present-day ideas of what constitutes literary excellence in a libretto, but simply for their suitability for musical setting—and here his skill was almost uncanny. Here lies the essential difference between his theory of opera and that of Gluck. In Mozartian opera it is neither the thinker nor the poet who calls the tune, but the musician alone, and even so not the musician in general, however great his genius, but only the dramatist-musician who is able at once to take the poet in tow. At the start Mozart did not require a complete text-book from his poet, but merely a general outline. As soon as he had that in his hands he at once set to work to clothe it with his musical imagination. The poet could soon see how successful he had been with his verses. If they fitted Mozart's rough drafts of the music they could stand, if not they must be ruthlessly altered. Quite frequently he had completed the music to an aria in his head before the poet had sent him a line of the words. For Gluck such a thing would have been a sheer impossibility.

But what most attracted Mozart in a dramatic piece was the very thing about which neither Gluck nor the Italians concerned themselves: the individual man, considered purely as a natural phenomenon, a unique creation, without any idealistic or ethical trappings. Anyone who looks in Mozart's operas for any sort of moral

standard soon finds himself badly astray. On the other hand, Mozart opens to our view 'a flooding sea of transfigured forms'⁽¹⁾ who are as true to life to-day as when they were first created. We can see why in 'Figaro' he stripped the whole glittering raiment of politics and sociology from Beaumarchais' 'tract for the times.' Even in the case of Don Juan's struggle with the Statue there is no question of any Schillerian theme of guilt and expiation, but merely the old renaissance conception of existence and non-existence, and the tragedy of the conclusion derives its impressiveness simply from the tremendous power of the dramatic event and not from any ethical considerations. Mozart's supernatural beings come from a quite different world from Gluck's.

Nor was the Mozartian opera any more concerned with the caricature that marked Italian *opera buffa* than with Gluck's preoccupation with ethics. That is why to the Italian mind it doesn't seem 'comic' at all. In its striving for realistic expression it has no need of caricature: its sets on the stage figures drawn simply from real life, true not merely of this or that particular age, but of all ages. At the same time Mozart displays a further aspect of his genius—what, in contrast to the realism which points to his Swabian origin, we may call the Austrian side of him—an irony unexampled in the history of opera. The source of this was his marvellous gift of sympathising with the joys and sorrows of his characters and so bringing them home to the bosoms of his hearers, while at the same time never ceasing to measure them by ideal standards. He knows quite well where his Figaro, Susanna or the Count and Countess feel the rub and lets his hearers feel it too. But all the time we are aware of the master looking down upon his creatures from above in a spirit of smiling irony, laughing quietly and good-naturedly at their all-too-human weaknesses. It is this persistent note of genial irony in Mozart's work that constitutes one of its chief attractions. And anything less Italian could hardly be imagined.

Only 'Die Zauberflöte' approaches Gluck's domain—not in form, but in spirit. Here we find the great realist, at the close of his life, stirred by masonic ideas and by forebodings of his own death, turning philosopher and paying homage to ethical ideals in art as well as in life. For the first time we find a Mozart opera based upon a moral idea, that of humanity: for the first time the characters can be separated into good and bad. This ethical standpoint harks back to Gluck, and traces of Gluck's influence are to be met with in several portions of the work, particularly in the scenes with the priests. But its

⁽¹⁾ The original reads: ein Meer, das 'flutend strömt gesteigerte Gestalten.' It is from Goethe's 'Bei Betrachtung von Schillers Schädel,' line 25. (Translator's note.)

wealth of form and style, the fusion of human and divine elements in figures pulsing with life, and the undeniable fact that even here the source of Mozart's inspiration is essentially musical—all this finally removes it from Gluck's sphere and stamps it with a greatness all its own.

As we have shown, comparison of Gluck and Mozart leads to the conclusion that in character and genius the two masters are diametrically opposed to one another. What is common to them is confined to certain superficial features which are quite natural in the works of contemporary masters, but do not necessarily imply any closeness of spiritual contact. But it is for us to see that we do not tamper with an opposition thus established on the evidence of facts by introducing subjective judgments of value of a purely dilettante kind. Anyone whose appreciation of art is so narrow that he is unable to do justice both to Mozart and to Gluck is precluded from any serious criticism of either master. The fact that at the present moment Gluck enjoys less favour with the general public than Mozart does not in the least affect the value of his art. Apart from the fact that the prevalent opinion may change, it is not a question of whether Gluck's operas are good *repertoire* pieces or not. On the other hand, if the description 'festival art,' in the deepest sense of the words, is anywhere applicable it is to these noble and dignified works: with popular art, as ordinarily conceived, they have nothing in common. Nor will they ever be popular, even if, as has happened to Handel's operas, they should be staged more frequently than they have been in the past.

We may safely leave the amusement of playing off the one composer against the other to our coffee-room philosophers. What Goethe said of his relationship to Schiller is as true of the case of Gluck and Mozart. Instead of praising one at the expense of the other we should congratulate ourselves on the possession of two such 'stalwart fellows.'

HERMANN ABERT.

Authorised Translation by C. B. OLDMAN.

THE RELATION BETWEEN SOUND AND COLOUR

THERE was a time when it would have been regarded as absurd, or at all events as a symptom of decadence, to raise the question of a correspondence between sound and colour. And yet amongst musicians this is by no means a new problem. We know that a very long time ago there were persons, very often musicians, to whom sounds presented themselves as coloured, so to speak. Resonance evoked a colour association, and this was not a fortuitous happening but was repeated with the invariability of a law. Later on, of course, this phenomenon or, if you prefer it, this faculty, attracted a certain amount of attention amongst scholars, and the name of synopsis or colour-ear was bestowed upon it. So far it appears to be an open question as to whether this connection is organic, conditioned by certain causes of a physiological character, certain proximities or contacts of the optic and auditory nervous ramifications; or whether it is merely associative, a kind of conditional reflex, and therefore may vary with different persons, maintaining nevertheless within the given individual a certain stability.

I encountered the problem of synopsis some twenty years ago, my friendship with the Russian composer Skryabin being one of the causes which led me to make a careful and more exhaustive study of this question. He was included amongst the musicians—there were quite a number of them—such as Rimsky-Korsakov, Neuhaus (pianist), Blumenfeld (composer), Zhilyaev, Bryusov, and Rozenov (theorists), and myself, who were fully conscious of a distinct association between sound and colour. Of composers of the past we have evidence that the colour-ear was possessed by Wagner, Berlioz, Liszt, Chopin, Franck, and Debussy. A definite connection exists between a composer's talent for colour (orchestral or instrumental in general) and his aptitude for the colour-ear. Those who are organically deficient in colouring (Schumann, Rakhmaninov, Glazunov, Brahms, Myaskovsky, Medtner) usually lack the colour-ear, whereas the great colourists have always been more or less consciously endowed with this faculty.

This phenomenon itself is an extremely subtle one and as its study is attended with serious difficulties every precaution must be taken to

avoid mistakes. I had to make a number of experiments in order to establish the only methodology of investigation before I could consider myself justified in proceeding to a scientific exploration of the subject.

It must be borne in mind that this domain has long been infected with amateur analogies. Much literature has been written and many attempts expended on the organisation of a sort of music of colours, constructed in the form and semblance of the music of sounds. The primitive idea usually proceeds on pseudo-scientific lines—sound and light are forms of vibrations, and the pitch of a note is analogous to coloured light. Investigators—it would be more correct to call them visionaries—of this type occupy themselves with the establishment of a correspondence between sound and colour on the principle of this primitive parallelism. As we know, there even exist colour organs built in accordance with this theory. All this is outside the limits of the scientific method and therefore I shall not concern myself with it.

The phenomenon of synopsis, regarded in a strictly scientific aspect, is by no means such a simple one, nor is it exhausted by the similarity of the vibrations of sound and light. In order to apportion it and to do away with any preliminary, *a priori* theorising, always so prejudicial, I was obliged to resort to introspective observation of my own sensations—I possess the gift of tonal vision—and to questionnaires. The latter method had to be regulated by strict conditions, in order to avoid preconceived, inaccurate, and slipshod replies, or information that was merely imaginary ('improvisational information,' as I termed it).⁽¹⁾

The subject itself is divisible into several sections. First of all I drew up a form of questionnaire and a system of enquiries. The phenomenon of synopsis proved to be closely connected, *inter alia*, with the absolute ear (the memory for tonal pitch) expressed in some way or other, with the faculty of guessing the pitch of a note. Some musicians, however, furnished me with interesting instances of an ability to divine the colour of a note only, and not its pitch—they were more sensible of the former than of the latter. Persons with a poor idea of pitch usually appeared to be almost or altogether wanting in colour-vision,

(1) There exists, again, the sphere of purely mystical correspondences between sounds and colours, based on the ancient occult symbolism and the teachings which arose in connection with the Egyptian temples concerning the associations of the planets and the days of the week and the notes of the scale, of the zodiac and the months. I must remark, for the sake of scientific accuracy, that the influences of these mystical associations were often encountered in my investigations, especially with Skryabin, who, as we know, was a mystic and a theosophist in his form of thought, and whose sound-colour conceptions were partly conditioned by them.

though they often proved to have an aptitude for other (non-colour) associations of a visual order.

So that the replies might be accurate, the subjects of my experiments were asked not to *describe* the colour associated with a tonal phenomenon, but to *indicate* it in a special table of colours, which represented Helmholtz's colour cone developed, and included every possible shade.

With each person the experiments were repeated several times in order to exclude improvisational information and any doubt as to the stability of his sensations. I consider this very important, and, as a matter of fact, the investigation showed that a great deal of the evidence was confused, and was entirely altered upon a repetition of the experiment. As a rule, in carrying out the tests the key and the pitch of the tonal phenomenon under review were not indicated. The experiments then showed that an indication of this kind generally modifies the information obtained, unless the person under examination possesses the absolute ear. It is evident that two sets of associations are involved here, the one arising from the direct sensation produced and the other from the name of the tonal phenomenon. Thus the name C major yielded a certain colour association.

Within the limits of a brief article I cannot give a complete exposition of my method, which will be published in a special memoir. I merely wish to acquaint my readers with some of the results of my labours, especially those which may be of very great artistic and practical importance to music.

Two hundred and fifty persons were subjected to examination. I divided them into groups, according to their ability to distinguish tonal phenomena. It is an interesting fact that a professional musical training proved to have but little influence on the faculty of the colour-ear, or of the visual ear in general.

These 250 persons gave the following results:—

Visual associations of some kind	...	...	...	...	226
Definite colour associations	...	...	...	...	176
Isolated notes associated with colours	...	...	...	...	18
Harmonies associated with colours (usually tonalities were also included)	...	...	...	...	24
Registers associated with intensity of colour (in every case a low register was dark, a high register light, and a medium register indefinite)	...	...	...	...	218
Tonalities associated with colours (the majority also included harmonies)	...	...	...	...	170
Timbres associated with colours	...	...	...	...	47

The general conclusions to be drawn from these figures are interesting. It should be noted first of all that for the vast majority these

associations actually exist, if only in a feeble, undifferentiated form. This, of course, proves that here there can be no question of chance or imagination, that the realm of colour-sound relations into which we are gazing is real. Further deductions, moreover, will convince us that these relations represent a type of conditional reflex, and vary so much in different persons that we cannot speak scientifically of any organic correspondence between the visual colour sensations and the tonal sensations. Nevertheless, after allowing for individual variations we find that the phenomena have a certain common nucleus, common to all who submitted to the tests, and herein an organic law is certainly discernible, a genuine connection between the sensations of sound and colour.

We observe that the bulk of the examinees testify to the association of low sounds with darkness and of high sounds with light. This might be described as a very crude acceptance of sound-light. The prevalence of this idea is further proved, apart from my experiments, by nearly all music of a descriptive character. The mention of the scene in *Fafner's forest cave* ('Siegfried'), the *Fire-Spell* ('Die Walküre'), the pictures of sunrise and sunset, the general type and method of depicting fading and growing light in opera and song, will suffice to show that there is an inner correspondence between these sensations—of light and a high sound and of darkness and a low sound. As to the type of this connection, I cannot say whether it is metaphorical or whether its manifestation is due to the customary groups of associative impressions which accompany darkness (the gloom of night and nocturnal noises, the darkness attending a storm and the low sounds simultaneously produced by the storm); or brilliant light with the sounds usually connected with it (hissing, a high-pitched crackling). I must, however, point out that the associative explanation is clearly insufficient. When we have to do with actual sounds, darkness is not invariably represented by low notes, nor light by a high register. Lastly, both light and darkness can be absolutely silent, and yet the association of a low register with gloom and a high register with light proves to be extremely persistent. Here we may possibly be concerned with the actual connections of sensations of a different type.

The instances in which colours are perceived, and not merely the intensities of light, appear to be considerably rarer. This evidently presupposes a greater sense of tone, a fuller appreciation of its details. It is interesting to find that the majority of the persons interrogated testify that harmonies, or even tonalities, appear to them to be coloured, but isolated notes do not. The associating of individual notes with colours, which is comparatively rare, amounts to associating

them with harmonies, for, after all, every note is acoustically a harmony of overtones ('klang,' to use Riemann's term). Lastly, we have the comparatively frequent cases in which whole works present themselves in this or the other light or colour (literally), and the still more frequent association of timbres with colours; manifestly the latter phenomenon is closely related to some aptitude for thinking in terms of tone-colour and to an imagination for timbre. In the group of those who associate harmonies and tonalities with various colours we are struck by the quite general fact that the minor harmonies and keys present themselves in the same hues as the major, but paler and weaker—diluted, as it were. Sometimes, but not very often, the minor has the colour of the relative major. Finally, there is the definite group of persons with whom tone-forms excite sensations of forms as well as of lights and colours.

An interest of a special kind is aroused by the question of what might be called the absolute pitch of these associations. Concerned with colour-vision, they are, as all my experiments showed, far more complex than the mere fact of correspondence. The phenomenon of this colour-ear recalls to a certain extent that of the absolute ear. An alteration of the pitch by a small interval (approximately 0.25-0.35 of a tone, according to my measurements) causes no change in the observed colour. This proves that here we have not to do with a simple association with a given acoustic note or harmony, but with a certain orientation of the person who hears the note or harmony, an orientation usually of a most complex type. It appeared to be a very general fact that enharmonically identical tonal phenomena (*e.g.*, the harmonies F sharp and G flat) excite different and even quite dissimilar colour associations. An equally prevalent fact was that the hearer under examination confused or did not distinguish visually harmonies whose relation to each other was that of a fifth (*e.g.*, the harmonies C major and F major). I succeeded in discovering that, as a rule, the relationship of harmonies conditions the relationship of their visual associations. It should be noted that the associated colours and lights nearly always prove to be complex, impure, non-spectral, the colours being usually diluted with white and the lights with darkness; also that the flat keys and harmonies (B flat, E flat, A flat, D flat, and G flat) are by many persons connected with metallic, glittering colours, with lustre and reflections. The more complex the key (the more sharps or flats there are in the signature) the more complex and fantastic is the colour associated with it. The colours corresponding to simple harmonies are almost pure.

As in the case of the absolute ear, an indispensable preliminary to the acquirement of colour association is the fixing of the psychics on

a given tonality. A note that is off the pitch, a harmony raised 0.25-0.35 of a tone above its normal pitch, are usually orientated to the original note or harmony; a further raising or lowering of the pitch is followed at first by period of vagueness and uncertainty, the person under examination having lost his bearings; then, as a rule, his attention is suddenly fixed on the next landmark with which he is familiar. By way of an example I quote the results obtained from experiments carried out with a man for whom the E major harmony was clearly associated with a whitish-blue colour and F major with red. He was given the E harmony at the normal pitch, then it was gradually raised, and this is what happened:—

Pure E		Whitish-blue	
Raised by 0.05		"	
" " 0.10		"	
" " 0.15		"	
" " 0.20		"	impression becomes confused
" " 0.25		"	vague
" " 0.30		"	(Examinee says that if it is E it is whitish-blue, but if F it is red)
" " 0.35	Red		
" " 0.40	"		
" " 0.45	"		
" " 0.50	"		
" " 0.55	"		
" " 0.60	"		

From this experiment, carried out by me many times, with various people, we see that a preliminary orientation to tonal pitch, to a sort of internal tuning fork, is indispensable to the attainment of a clear vision. When the pitch of a chord is somewhere between the customary landmarks (semitones) the sensation is vague, and the vision of the hearer depends on whether he relates the chord to E or to the adjacent harmony F.

Colour associations most often prove to be distinct only after this orientation to our semitonal system has been effected; intermediate harmonies, the notes between the keys are referred to one side or the other, and do not acquire a colour until they have been orientated. The profound connection of all these phenomena with our system of fifths becomes clear, and sometimes these colour associations seem to be contingent, not so much on the actual resonances as on the number of sharps or flats in the key signatures.

The importance of knowing the names of the harmonies or of seeing them in writing came out very strongly in another series of experiments, in which the harmonies were first of all given to the examinees anonymously (by ear, none of the persons experimented upon had the

absolute ear); then they were asked to state in writing their colour associations with the *written* harmonies. As is evident from the following table, the results differed considerably.

EXAMINEE No 142. ⁽¹⁾

Harmony.	Heard.	Written.
E	Silvery-grey ..	Azure
F.. ..	White	Green
e	Pale Rose	Flint
f	White (4) Red (1)..	Red
A.. ..	Yellow	Rose
b	Blue (3) White (2) ..	Moonlight
C.. ..	White (4) ..	White
	Yellow Grey (1) ..	
B.. ..	Blue	Pale Blue
F Sharp	Purple (4)	Dark Blue
	Crimson (1)	
D	Rose (2) Yellow (3) ..	Yellow
d	Straw Colour	Straw Colour
D Flat	Purple (4)	{ Bronze (4)
	Carrotty (1)	
G Flat	Dark Blue	Blue-Black
A Flat	Colour of a storm ..	{ Lilac (4)
	cloud	
E Flat	Leadens	Steel
B Flat	Greenish	Metallic grey
b Flat	Leadens	Leadens

Thirty-two of the answers to my enquiries are appended in tabular form.⁽²⁾ Certain details are interesting. With many persons the sensations of light and colour are combined with the perception of an outline or shape, in the form of spangles or of the play of lights. I would draw attention to the fact that examinee No. 1 is A. N. Skryabin, No. 2 N. Rimsky-Korsakov, and No. 3 myself. Unfortunately, space does not allow me to quote the full text of all the enquiries, which were very comprehensive.

What inferences may be drawn at the present time from these modest experiments, whose importance, as yet, consists in their having been carried out, as far as possible, under scientific conditions? First of all we can establish the purely psychological fact that colour associations not only constitute a psychological reality, but are even very widespread and are not confined to musicians; from my enquiries of laymen (non-musicians) it is clear that out of 600 persons 124 possessed the embryos of this colour-vision. Further, we may undoubtedly conclude that this association is not the mere parallelism for which thinkers on this subject usually display a propensity. In this phenomenon we can certainly detect the outlines of a conformity to law, permitting us to conjecture that it is not a simple, fortuitous

⁽¹⁾ There were five tests in each case.

⁽²⁾ See table at the end of the article.

association which has in some way become indurated and habitual, but an organic connection between the sensations of sound and colour. It may very well be that the essence of this connection is an interposed association which is accomplished according to type: phenomenon A gives rise to the mental condition P; phenomenon B also gives rise to the mental condition P; therefore A and B are analogous, and an association is set up. This explanatory method is adaptable, for example, to the phenomenon which we have already examined of the association of the dynamics of light with tonal pitch (registers). It is confirmed by the fact, previously indicated by me, that complex keys and harmonies (with many sharps or flats in the signature) generally present themselves in the more complex colours. I would bring to your notice, however, the extreme subtlety and instability of the whole of this domain: in it casual associations, to which the attention is furthermore directed, may become customary and cling to the phenomenon, as it were, for ever. The same fate may overtake associations intentionally evoked by the construction of some preconceived theory. To such I would refer Skryabin's idea of tone-vision, the more so as I know that originally he recognised clearly no more than three colours—red, yellow, and blue, corresponding to C,⁽²⁾ D, and F sharp respectively. The others he deduced rationally, as it were, starting from the assumption that related keys correspond to related colours; that in the realm of colour the closest relationship coincides with proximity in the spectrum; and that as regards tonalities it is connected with the circle of fifths. Skryabin simplified the problem to the extreme, rationalising it prematurely, and possibly destroying thereby the vitality of the association, which for him became an habitual one.

One of the most important results obtained is the fact that the conscious recognition of colour proves to be dependent, not on the actual tonal form, but on the inner resonance with which the external tonal phenomenon is, so to speak, identified. The external phenomenon may be a harmony in the key of C, let us say, but unless we feel that it is in that key it will not have for us the colour corresponding to C. The possessor of the absolute ear can accept as C only the tonalities or harmonies really close to C; if the hearer lacks the absolute ear he can often tune himself so that any tonality sounds like C and has the corresponding colour form. In the latter case the colour form alters in accordance with the determination of the inner

(2) Here we can hardly get away from the influence of the mystical theories of a theosophical type concerning colour correspondences such as Blavatsky's in the *Secret Doctrine*. In it C is definitely referred to red, and Skryabin was familiar with the book.

ear. Synopsis thus appears to be directly coupled with the inner resonance, and not with the external tonal phenomenon.

I would draw special attention to the forms accompanying the reception of tonal complexes. The vast majority of them are associated with timbres and harmonies (chords). The forms corresponding to consonances are rounded (circles, ellipses, arcs); to dissonances, angular (acute angles, zigzags). The reception of the octave as a line, the fifth as a circle, the fourth as a distorted circle (an ellipse or an oval), the third and the sixth as right angles (squares and parallelograms), and the second and the seventh as acute angles (zigzags) proved to be most widely diffused. In the replies this was the general rule, but the details varied extraordinarily—some saw circles and combinations of circles, others designs in which the geometrical forms indicated above predominated, others plain geometrical figures. The enquiries made it clear that the association of forms and movements with the tonal line (melody and figuration) is enormously prevalent. It is well-known that this association has long been used in creative work for descriptive purposes, so that there was nothing of the unexpected in the result.

It would be premature to draw more detailed conclusions from the appended tables, which represent only the first attempts in this direction, only the first steps towards the collection of materials. Judging from all the data, the phenomenon is marked by great complexity and is by no means exhausted by the existence of a certain simple analogy between the planes of the sensations of sound and colour. In examining the tables one is struck by the general confusion with regard to the tints of flat keys and the difficulty of explaining them; the terms in which they are described are vague, and for most of the witnesses they include metallic shades and spangles. Again, for the great majority the minor keys resemble either the relative major keys, or the major keys of the same denomination, but the colours are faded and duller. Sometimes these two categories of the major keys are confounded. It may further be observed that the colours grow darker and the shades vaguer in proportion to the departure from C, whether in the direction of the sharp or the flat keys. The pure colours of the spectrum are very rarely encountered. It is also interesting to note that different persons sometimes characterise a key by alternative colours—F, for instance, is red or green, D blue or yellow, and so forth. One of the examinees (No. 6) even associates D with both yellow and blue. In most cases C is recognised as white, and one wonders if this is due to its association with the white keys of the pianoforte (No. 6 describes it as the colour of ivory, whitish-yellow). Nearly everybody assigns a very dark colour to G flat, and this, again, may perhaps be connected with the black keys.

I would point to other replies which reveal a certain unanimity. Thus, D is described as yellow by 78 per cent., E and B as bluish by 87 per cent., F as red by 70 per cent., G as greyish and brownish by 76 per cent., and the flat minor keys are characterised as gloomy, leaden, dark or foggy, smoky. The most brilliant colour is attributed by 78 per cent. to C major and D major, followed by A major and E major: the most gloomy keys in the opinion of 79 per cent. are B flat minor, E flat minor, G flat major, and F minor. It is interesting to compare the results of these enquiries with the practice of composers. Work of this kind has already been undertaken by me and should confirm and support the method of enquiry. In this connection it is not unprofitable to recall a few episodes from musical literature representing certain moods and colours. Let us take, for instance, Brünnhilde's awakening (C); the Fire-Spell (E); the revelation of the Rhine-gold, from the first scene of the Tetralogy (C); Walhalla (D flat, the lilac, triumphant key, the key of purple and imperialism and at the same time of the colours of the sunset); the 'Forest Murmurs' (E); Chopin's Funeral March (B flat minor); the scene of the Norns (E flat minor); the 'Goldfish' from 'Sadko' (D major). Examples might be multiplied indefinitely. They reveal the fact that composers have in practice long made use of their inner tone-vision in order more brilliantly to incarnate in sound their colour-visions: and that practical employment of the phenomenon of synopsis, as one of the descriptive resources of the musical art, is no new thing.

LEONID SABANEV.

Translated by S. W. PRING.

C	c	G	g	D	d	A	a	E	e	B	b	F#	f#	C#	c#
1*	R	—	—	Y	WY	G	—	A	a	WB	—	BP	WGrV	—	—
2*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	ND	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
3*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
4*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
5*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
6*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
7*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
8*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
9*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
10*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
11*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
12*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
13*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
14*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
15*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
16*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
17*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
18*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
19*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
20*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
21*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
22*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
23*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
24*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
25*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
26*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
27*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
28*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
29*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
30*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
31*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—
32*	W	DGr	Gr	Y	WY	Ra	WRa	BX	La	DEST	NW	NGrV	WGrV	ND	—

The sign * denotes those whose 'vision' is not only tonal but also 'chordal,' i.e., who associate a colour not merely with the whole tonality but with its principal chord as well.

	F	f	Bp	bp	Ep	ep	Ap	ap	Dp	dp	Gp	gp
1* R	—	—	MDGrB	—	MDStB	—	NPrVM	—	DBrVM	—	BX	—
2* G	WG	—	DGrB	DGr	DGrBM	DGr	MGrV	—	DBrM	—	—	—
3* R	DNR	—	GrBM	GrM	StM	DGrM	DVM	—	DBrVM	—	DRVX	—
4* ?	?	—	GrBM	GrB	BrM	DM	DLBZ	—	VX	—	DNB	—
5* G	GGr	—	GrBG	?	B	—	PB	—	VPr	—	RNB	—
6 NArGr	?	—	ArGrD	Gr	XBG	DXAr	GrAr	—	XHAr	—	HX	—
7* R	DR	—	DGr	Ar	St	DSt	LM	—	VM	—	D	—
8* G	D	—	?	DM	St	DGr	BrM	—	LM	—	DGr	—
9* R	NWR	—	?	M	M	M	M	—	VM	—	D	—
10* R	?	—	M	Gr	St	D	V	—	LM	—	DR	—
11* G	?	—	Gr	WGr	St	D	BrV	—	RBr	—	DX	—
12* G	RBr	—	M	NGr	St	WNGr	BrM	—	M	—	DM	—
13* R	DRBr	—	DGr	GrSt	St	GrM	VM	—	Br	—	D	—
14* W	?	—	?	D	M	D	M	—	?	—	Pr	—
15* Y	WGr	—	Gr	M	DGr	?	VM	—	RFr	—	DB	—
16* R	DR	—	Gr	DGrG	M	D	L	—	V	—	DG	—
17* WR	D	—	G	?	St	?	?	—	?	—	?	—
18* GR	DV	—	DGrB	DGRBGr	Gr	M	B	—	B	—	D	—
19* R	D	—	Y	WY	W	Gr	RGr	—	?	—	D	—
20* OY	?	—	?	?	?	DGr	?	—	?	—	?	—
21* ?	DR	—	G	DG	M	Gr	V	—	Br	—	DBt	—
22 W	D	—	MGr	D	M	D	Br	—	Br	—	D	—
23* R	RD	—	?	DGGr	?	?	?	—	?	—	?	—
24 GGs	D	—	M	?	StX	DSt	VBr	—	Br	—	DM	—
25* R	DBr	—	Gr	DGrArSt	DAr	VAr	BrM	—	BrM	—	DM	—
26 R	?	—	B	WB	Sk	?	Pr	—	Fg	—	N	—
27 Gs	DGr	—	ArG	DArG	St	D	PrD	—	Z	—	DN	—
28 R	DBr	—	N	D	M	DN	U	—	BrSM	—	Dsm	—
29 R	Br	—	M	Sm	Ar	SmAr	ArV	—	VMZ	—	DZAr	—
30 R	?	—	SmM	Ln	M	D	?	—	D	—	D	—
31 W	?	—	?	?	St	?	?	—	Rs	—	D	—
32 RGr	BrD	—	ArG	DAr	M	D	RM	—	DOM	—	DBM	—

KEY TO THE APPENDED TABLES.

A	Azure	N	Indefinite
Ar	Silvery	O	Orange
B	Blue	P	Purple-red
Br	Brown	Pr	Purple
C	Clear	R	Red
D	Dark, dark with black in it, black	Rs	Rosy
Dm	Dim	S	Dazzling
F	Saturated	Sk	Sky-blue
Fg	Poggy	Sm	Smoky
Fr	Fiery-red	St	Steel
G	Green	U	Variegated
Gr	Grey	V	Violet
Gs	Grass-green	W	White, pale with white in it, pale
H	Rainbow-coloured	WY	Whitish-yellow
L	Lilac	X	With a glitter
Ln	Moon-coloured	Y	Yellow
M	Metallic	Z	Golden

Examples: NR=Reddish. ND=Dusky.

These names and abbreviations are employed by me here only. In the experiments, as already stated, the colours were given in a special colour table, in which they were numbered and reduced to a system (the colour-cone). The examinees had to indicate the No. which came nearest to the colour. At the same time supplementary explanations were added in writing.

EDITIONS OF 'BORIS GODUNOV'

- Mussorgsky's 'Boris Godunov' and its new version.* By Victor Belaiev. Translated from the Russian by S. W. Pring. Oxford University Press. 4s. net.
- En marge de 'Boris Godounof.'* Par Robert Godet. Paris; Alcan. London; Chester. 2 vols. 10s. net.
- M. Moussorgsky. *Boris Godounov.* Vocal score. London; Chester. 1926. Russian, French and English texts. 30s.
- M. Mussorgsky. *Boris Godunof.* Vocal score. Oxford University Press. 1928. English and French texts. 30s.

SINCE the number of the *Revue Musicale* (Paris, April, 1922), in which M. Robert Godet opened the question of what he then called 'the two Borises,' much has been written on the subject, and a reasonable excuse for adding to that mass of literature will be found if an opportunity presents itself of marshalling the known facts in such a way as to give a clear account of the whole contention. The case, of course, is that of Mussorgsky's original (or, as we shall see, eventual) version of the opera, published in 1874, and that version, hitherto the only available one, and still the only one to be heard on any stage outside Russia, which Rimsky-Korsakov prepared for publication twenty-two years later. For greater ease in understanding the complications of unpublished and published, edited and unedited 'states' of this work, the following table has been drawn up:—

(1) 1869	1st version	MS. Vocal and full score.
(2) 1871	2nd version	MS. Vocal and full score.
(3) 1874	3rd version	1st published version. V.S. printed. Full score MS.
(4) 1896	4th version (Rimsky-Korsakov)	2nd published version. V.S. and full score printed.
(5) 1908	5th version (Rimsky-Korsakov 2nd edition)	V.S. and full score printed.
(6) 1926	Chester	Corresponds to (3).
(7) 1928	O.U.P.	Corresponds to (3) with additions and annotations from all previous sources. Printed full score.

These versions differ from each other in a bewildering way owing to the amount of material that has not only been added or taken away, but also restored to its previous position in the score either wholly or in part. Mussorgsky himself was responsible for much of this

changing, or rather circumstances caused him to undertake extensive alterations in the concatenation of the events with which he had crowded the libretto. Two causes were contributory to this progressive amendment: the fact of the State management of the opera in St. Petersburg (as it then was; Mussorgsky called it Petrograd) which made it difficult, if not wholly impossible, to represent a work whose plot contained references to the Imperial Family or their ancestors in any way derogatory from their unimpeachable position; and, secondly, the criticism of those in charge of operatic activities in St. Petersburg (the Directorate of the Imperial Theatres) who used arguments, based upon the requirements of the operatic stage, to persuade Mussorgsky to alter his original score. The differences between (1) and (2) were occasioned by the refusal of the Directorate to accept the opera, and by their criticisms of it. Rimsky-Korsakov in his *Memoirs* (quoted by Victor Belaiev in his excellently clear account of the matter) says: 'Mortified and offended, Mussorgsky withdrew his score, but upon reflection decided to subject it to radical alterations and additions.' The alterations consisted in doing away with the scene 'by St. Basil's' (p. 305 in (7)), in taking the simpleton from that scene and placing his part in the scene 'near Kromy' (p. 264 in (6), p. 366 in (7), which was the last scene of the opera), in inserting the Polish scenes which though (according to V. V. Stasov) in existence (in sketch form) at the same time as (1) were not included when the work was sent to the Directorate; an unfortunate procedure of Mussorgsky's which provided those who formed this body with the excuse for not accepting the work because no female voice was written for.

The differences between (2) and (3) were occasioned by the composer changing the five acts into a prologue and four acts. Otherwise the published score of 1874 is virtually the same as the 1871 version. It was (3) that was used in the first complete performance in St. Petersburg on January 27, 1874 (on February 5, 1873, three scenes had been performed at the Mariinsky theatre). But although this score was used in the 1874 performances, these did not wholly follow the score as we now know it in the Chester edition, extensive cuts having been made for purposes of stage presentation. According to Belaiev (p. 25) the opera at this moment was divided into a prologue and three acts, the scene 'in Pimen's cell' and the coronation scene both being omitted. Whether these scenes were omitted in the first performance (1874) is not clear. Belaiev says that these cuts were made by 'Theatre officials in the season of 1874-5, i.e., the season after that in which "Boris" was first produced.' He vouches for the scene 'in Pimen's cell' at least being omitted in the first performance, so probably the coronation scene was treated similarly.

Next in order there comes, after an interval of twenty-two years and fifteen after the composer's death (4), which is the first of the two editions prepared both in vocal score and in full score by Rimsky-Korsakov. The edition follows, as regards order of scenes, the published score of 1874 (3), with the exception of the last act, where the order of scenes is reversed and the opera made to end with the death of the Tsar. Within the scenes themselves, however, Rimsky-Korsakov deleted many episodes. In his preface to (4) he says: 'I have made a few cuts because of the great length of the opera. Cuts of this kind were made when the opera was performed in the composer's lifetime.' This last remark is, if we follow Belaiev, right. In (5) these episodes were reinstated and this edition therefore became, as far as both order of scenes and order of episodes within those scenes were concerned, the same as (3), the edition of 1874. The order of the two scenes in the last act was, however, still reversed, and it was not until (6) appeared in 1926 that this act was restored to its first plan.

(6), therefore, is a complete reissue of (3). But it is also something more, and with its appearance a large question is dealt with. This fine edition, excellently printed, with its most interesting collection of photographs and reproductions placed as preface to the score, deliberately ignores the previous scores prepared by Rimsky-Korsakov, not only as regards the order of scenes (the scene 'near Kromy' now figures as the final one of the whole work) and of episodes, but puts on one side all the actual editing which Rimsky-Korsakov had brought to bear on the harmonic and contrapuntal structure of Mussorgsky's manuscript. Thus for the first time since 1874 a true Mussorgsky edition was made available. (Edition (3) soon, it would seem, became rare, presumably one copy only reaching a foreign country, the historic one which came first to Saint-Saëns in 1874 and then through Jules de Brayer to Debussy in 1889.) It only remained for M. Paul Lamm to bring his work on the original manuscripts to a conclusion for the Music Section of the Russian State Publishing Department to issue the remarkable definitive edition (7), which is published in England by the Oxford University Press. This edition differs from (6) in supplying all various readings of the opera taken from manuscript sources and from the 1874 printed edition. Furthermore, there is included a hitherto undiscovered scene 'at St. Basil's' which, in the last act, precedes the scene 'in the reception hall at the Kremlin.' This scene 'at St. Basil's' formed part of (1). Mussorgsky discarded it when revising the opera for (2), putting in its place (Belaiev p. 49) the scene 'near Kromy' (and eventually placing this, as has been seen, at the end of the whole work). The addition of this highly important fresh material gives (7) priority of interest over all previous editions. Both (6) and (7) have been issued with accom-

panying explanatory books, in the first case M. Godet's two volumes, in the second M. Belaiev's booklet.

With M. Godet's article in the *Revue Musicale* a vigorous polemic was instituted in favour of the true 'Boris.' No longer was it a question of a stage presentation of the Pushkin's drama of the two Dmitris, the one murdered at Ouglitsch, the other setting himself up as Pretender to the Russian throne. The scene of action was shifted from Moscow to Paris, the news proclaimed that Mussorgsky had suffered even more than Dmitri at the hands of his murderers by the mutilation of his greatest piece of creative work, that for years an imposter had been allowed to place his work in such a position as to obscure the magnificent proportions of the only real original and to deceive our ears with the false seductions of an altered text. In the light of this evidence, whose main elements have since been proved to be true, it is hardly to be wondered at that the violence of warm partisanship, supported as it was by a degree of righteous indignation against any who had either directly or indirectly contrived to uphold this gross dissimulation, should cause an amount of inflammatory matter to be discharged. Really it has been the manner rather than the matter which has been at times needlessly exceptionable. The case in itself was strong enough to warrant nothing but plain statement, such as is to be found in M. Belaiev's short study. Many will be grateful for the lively descriptions, from the pen of M. Godet, of the documents included in the Chester edition of the score of 'Boris.' He has brought much zeal to the task of elucidation, and has succeeded in throwing light upon many significant facts. It is the more to be regretted that this writer should have found it either necessary for a clear statement of Mussorgsky's case or compatible with the dignity of both composers and with the importance of the subject in general to indulge in dialectics which tend to disparage the work of Rimsky-Korsakov in this matter. At this stage it is needless to enquire what personal motives were in play while the revision of 'Boris' was being decided upon, and even M. Godet gives Rimsky-Korsakov the credit of having acted from an unselfish point of view. What is more important is the larger question of revisions in general.

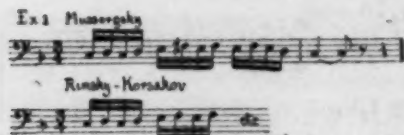
As a firm rule it may be laid down that the principle of revisions is an evil one as well as a dangerous. If this is granted, then Rimsky-Korsakov's labours on 'Boris' are at best useless, though the purist would say they are noxious. As a matter of principle it would have been better to leave Mussorgsky's score as he himself left it in 1874 (the printed vocal score (3) and the MS. full score). As a matter of fact, this would probably have had the effect of keeping the opera off the stage, at least for a great number of years. Until there has

been an opportunity of hearing this version (3) as Mussorgsky left it this latter question must remain unanswered. It is possible that the composer's orchestration will be found to be feasible. A glance through the orchestral score of (3)⁽¹⁾ gives the impression that there is a great deal of ineffective workmanship among passages of unusual forcefulness, though the matter must be finally judged by the ear, not the eye. But in any case, it is safe to say that the instability of the scoring would have been one cause of the opera's lying unperformed for some years. Not that this matters. The eventual re-appearance might well have been as notable an event, and one as fruitful for us, as have been these years in which we have known only a trimmed version. But those who have been moved by 'Boris' in the time between 1874 and now must thank Rimsky-Korsakov for what he did to the orchestral score. Whether his work was good or bad the fact remains that he persuaded the authorities that it was of a kind which made performances of 'Boris' something that a self-respecting orchestra might be asked to undertake. This leaves the question of principle unanswered. But it is one which has no answer, being really not a question at all but a statement. In principle Rimsky-Korsakov was not justified in touching another man's work. All that it is necessary to insist on here is that if 'Boris' had never been tidied and spring-cleaned probably the Russian Revolution alone would have made a performance possible in Russia. Whether in that case performances would have been given outside Russia is, of course, problematical. Undoubtedly Rimsky-Korsakov's work as editor prepared the way for the opera's career abroad, by placing it more nearly within the general range of players.

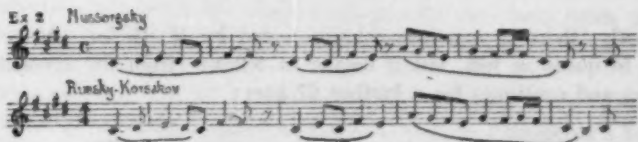
'Boris' was worked on by Rimsky-Korsakov from two other angles besides that of the orchestration. One of these was the length of the opera and order of the scenes. The other consisted in definite alterations of both melodies and harmonic progressions. And it is here that he has most sternly been called to book. Now that M. Paul Lamm (and M. Boris Assafiew whose name appears on the title page of the orchestral score (7)) has given the world the result of laborious and successful research in the MS. department of the Public Library, Leningrad, the full extent of Rimsky-Korsakov revisions and alterations can be gauged. They fall into five main categories: alterations of the actual melody, of the metre (barring), of the harmony (either a change in the key sequence, or in the disposition of a chord), transpositions, interpolations.

(1) The Oxford University Press have this on hire as a complementary part of (7), and I am indebted to this firm for an opportunity to study the orchestral score.

The following is an example of alteration of melody.



In the following M. Godet gives an example of an important alteration of metre.



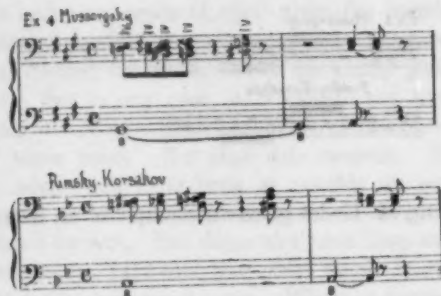
Changes of key-sequence are frequent.



The redistribution of chords is a matter that only has to do with the orchestral version. In every case where the pianoforte score of an opera is fabricated the musical text has to be arranged to fit the new instrument. Therefore until it is possible to compare the two orchestral scores examples of this type of editing cannot be forthcoming.

Transpositions were continually introduced by Rimsky-Korsakov

A continuation of the last example will show how this was done, and how, after 35 bars, the two versions reach the same key.



Lastly, there is one interpolation noted by M. Godet. It is too long to quote in full, but it begins as follows (from the coronation scene) and continues for a further 27 bars :



There cannot well be any excuse for these alterations. Nevertheless, it may be of interest to find the reasons for them which existed in Rimsky-Korsakov's mind.

The first case is a gross one. The tyranny of the text-book is here felt at its strongest. The suppression of one sharp has done more to call into question Rimsky-Korsakov's right to the title of artist than all his own works have done to support that right. His reason for doing it is too apparent to need any comment. The ancients called the augmented fourth the devil. We may leave it thus.

The next case is not so easy to decide upon. M. Godet quotes it and says that in altering the barring Rimsky-Korsakov has made 'all the accents . . . come in the wrong place.' But Rimsky-Korsakov himself brings in the second statement of this tune (in the next bar) in exactly the barring that Mussorgsky wrote. In order to get both entries on the same part of the bar Mussorgsky has recourse to this :



which sounds, it must be owned, weak. Rimsky-Korsakov evidently felt this, and it was to avoid the repetition of the two notes marked with asterisks that he re-barred the first entry of the tune.

The change of key-sequence quoted is a curious one. The character singing is Schuisky, the traitorous counsellor of Boris. Since his entry on the scene his part has been one of studied simplicity and humility, and the effect of this has been obtained by casting his utterances in a series of clearly-defined, generally major, keys, while the Tsar has sung his in a quickly changing range of keys. Mussorgsky, to enhance the importance of this description of the murdered body of the young Tsarevitch lying at Ouglitsch, suddenly changes Schuisky's part to one of Boris's own highly-coloured keys. Rimsky-Korsakov, in order to keep Schuisky's manner of dealing with the narrative on the same emotional level as all his other dealings with the Tsar, holds on to that G major which previously had characterised the simulated frankness of the traitor.

Transpositions will have been occasioned sometimes by Rimsky-Korsakov's endeavour to place a phrase in what he considered a better position for the voice, but mostly will have been brought about by a redistribution of the orchestral parts with a view, again, to obtaining the greatest possible effectiveness.

As for interpolation, there can be no excuse for such rough-and-ready methods with another man's work. The reasons for the example quoted above are, however, easy enough to find. It is but one more case of Rimsky-Korsakov's expert eye for the effective. The coronation scene provides one of the most original spectacles of the opera. In adding these bars to the scene Rimsky-Korsakov gives the producer the opportunity to lengthen the great, many-coloured procession of Boyards going to the cathedral, and incidentally provides for some excellent choral singing.

These are the facts of the case. We are not here concerned with judging them. Even if the superior effectiveness of Rimsky-Korsakov's orchestration is proved, the principle involved can always be quoted by those who uphold the inviolability of a man's work, and who must stand as firm for the use of the Bach trumpets and the discarding of Mozart's wind parts in Handel. That is a perfectly justifiable position to take up and, of course, the only logical one. For the less informed musicians, especially for those whose musical memories go back to the early seasons of Russian opera in London, the case will always be harder. For they will have to cast from them the remembrance of many an entrancing passage which has since been found to be Rimsky-Korsakov's alteration of the original, many a grand burst of changing harmonies will have to be blotted from the memory when a

perusal of Mussorgsky's score (7) fails to bring that passage to light. Such an one is example 5 above, for certainly one of the most arresting moments of the music at the beginning of that act came when the composer (whom we now know to have been Rimsky-Korsakov), continuing for four bars the A major chord which had ended the shout of 'Long life,' changes back again to D flat major with such rich effect. But it is rightly not allowed to admire things of that kind, and we can only regretfully record that even while providing us with a moment of great beauty Rimsky-Korsakov has done us a disservice. However, future generations will have, thanks to M. Paul Lamm, a better means of keeping a clear mind on this difficult matter. The question of principle will remain stable. That of artistic merit will probably never cease being discussed, nor be satisfactorily settled.

SCOTT GODDARD.

THE FUNDAMENTAL QUALITIES OF FOLK MUSIC

It has often seemed to me that in spite of the fact that the subject of folk music has been widely investigated and presented, particularly during the last twenty years or so, most people have only a very vague idea as to what is the real difference between, say, a simple tune of Arne's and a typical English folk tune. And they would be unable to explain why the latter should interest most people to some extent and certain others almost exclusively. If they were pressed for an answer, they would probably give the usual explanations as to simplicity, freshness, directness, spontaneity and so on. But these smooth and easy adjectives, however apposite they may be, spring from a superficial conception of the subject, and are prompted by a desire, at the same time, to make some sentimental and picturesque explanation. I hope some day to show that folk music is not quite so simple as it sounds, that it is usually very far from being artless, that it is often quite hard and terse and incapable of any sentimental explanation, and that the whole thing is an enigma which is somehow derived more from the facts of biology than from the more familiar mists of psychology. For if the whole mass of so-called art music is, as it seems to me to be, an evocation that is definitely subjective and psychological, the purest tradition in folk music, to some extent at least, is an objectivication of biological peculiarities in the culture that produces it.

This wide differentiation between psychological and physiological influences in art and folk music respectively, is no more true than most generalisations, but it serves to emphasise a distinction which I believe to be fundamental.

I find, for instance that the direct spontaneous effect is produced because the performer, whether as singer, dancer or player, does his part without giving any or much impression that he is participating in the act. And his native wood notes wild, far from giving me the popularly conceived effect of a free and careless improvisation, show him definitely to be in the grip of a remorseless and comparatively inelastic tradition which gives him little or no scope for personal expression (again as popularly conceived). He is, in fact, the exponent of a mystery which functions through him, but scarcely with his deliberate co-operation. (How different is this from the attitude of the average professional singer, who, in nine cases out of ten, just

knows enough about his art to give him the notion and the confidence to abuse it!) Of course he clears his throat possibly, or hums and haws before he is actually cajoled into singing, but once fairly started, he is almost entirely in the hands of the generations of folk singers who have passed their songs on to him. Through him the culture speaks, and he has neither the desire nor the specific comprehension to mutilate what he has received. This incidentally may explain the purity of the oral tradition, which, in spite of occasional divergencies and the multiplication of variant versions, is something quite remarkable when one considers the centuries through which it has obtained.

In any case, it will be realised that such an unswerving fidelity to example and precedent can allow but little scope for the exploitation of the psyche (if the average rustic can be considered to be in possession of such a vague function), and that all that can be included in folk art are peculiarities which are common to and can be appreciated by individual members of the community that produces it. Hence it is that little that is personal can find a place.

I had a glimpse of this not long ago in a certain village public-house in Cumberland where I am known and appreciated as 'Lella Bell's son, the blacksmith's dower,' simply because my mother was born and lived in the village many years ago. And I certainly do not attempt to destroy this impression by going about with pencil and note-book in hand, and thus establishing my present identity (on such occasions) as that of a musician who is unaccountably interested in old songs. On this occasion we had a few songs very informally. Mostly they were bad and very badly sung. But one man of about fifty, when eventually prevailed on to sing, came out with a version of a (once) very popular Cumberland song, 'Sally Gray,'⁽¹⁾ which was a variant of a song I have known and sung myself since boyhood. The actual difference in notes from my own version was quite subtle, but I was more particularly interested in the method and poise of his delivery. It was quite evident to me that his was a voice speaking directly out of the past. His whole attitude and manner of singing was quite emotionless, and it was evident that he 'obliged' us with his song as a sort of pleasant but fairly unexciting duty (duty, that is to say, in a social and non-moral sense). He had been taught his part, and here was an occasion on which he was expected to perform. His way was not that of your modern tavern brawler, who harps on the emotions like any *prima donna*, expects a *furore* at the end of his song—and usually gets it! It was evident, in this case, that 'Sally Gray' did not suit the company, and was

(1) See my arrangements of this, for solo voice and piano, and also for mixed chorus. (Oxford University Press.)

only tolerated as an old man's quaverings, stale, old-fashioned and unexciting. And this although the whole company was of honest rustics honestly quaffing their honest ale in the manner in which a romantically interested society expects of them. They were all the genuine article, and according to common report, should have joined in the chorus, and improvised a few verses communally on the spot. But the next item was a cheap music hall song of about forty years ago, as I reckoned, with a refrain, 'I didn't stop to say good-bye,' which pleased tremendously and soon put everyone in a good humour again after the tedium of 'Sally Gray.'

I remember, too, being similarly impressed at the Lyceum Theatre when, in 1927, the English Folk Dance Society brought over the traditional dancers from the Basque Provinces to take part in their annual Albert Hall festival. Throughout the whole of their dances, I could detect not a single evidence of any emotional participation in the face of any one of them. Whereas in the case of the 'created' dancers of the Folk Dance Society they appeared, or seemed determined to appear, as if they were enjoying every minute of it. Whatever the implication may be in this last sentence, it was quite certain that in their case there was a mass interest as well as a personal excitement. And while they were able to produce on the audience the accustomed effect of mild jollification, the implication in the Basque dances was one of profound gravity and cool, inevitable intention. Similarly, with a more homely team of traditional sword dancers from Earsdon, Northumberland, during whose less pretentious but completely efficient evolutions there was not the faintest suggestion of the flushed cheek and the sparkling eye. And it was ten times the more impressive because of it.

Once, too, at Celtic Park, at Corona, Long Island, I happened to take an American with me to see the New York Irish amusing themselves on a Sunday afternoon. There, after morning mass, they foregather mainly for Gaelic football, hurling and dancing. To each dancing group was usually a fiddler and an accordeon player, while others made shift with a flute and drum. There were six or seven of these groups, mostly dancing what they called 'Irish sets.' These were after the style of quadrilles and lancers, only with much more elaboration in the footwork. After each set was over, the musicians went round with the hat, and got in a nickel or a dime from each dancer. Which done, they immediately struck up again and touted round for couples to make up the new set.

I was chiefly interested in the amazing technique of the accordeon players in the fast jig and reel tunes they played, and the closeness with which their fiddling partners followed them, even down to the least important grace notes. But my American friend had been

watching the dancers, and turned to me with astonishment to say that they did not look as if they were enjoying it at all. I looked at their faces, and saw the same blank but impressive expression that I have remarked on in the case of the Basque and Northumberland dancers. Since when I have decided that enjoyment, even intelligently understood, has little or nothing to do with art.

As has already been suggested, the popular impression that folk music is wild, unpremeditated and naïve is something a good deal less than a half truth. Each body of folk music that I have looked into has proved to be an intense cultivation, usually within very narrow limits, and is built up on forms and clichés that are almost invariable. They are thought to be wild and unrestrained because these formulæ and clichés do not conform to the more familiar professional patterns. But each categorical cultivation in folksong has its own still more rigid rules and regulations which the performer is aware of intuitively and not intellectually.

Similarly the word 'artless,' so often applied in this connection, is extremely misleading. The skill of certain traditional instrumentalists, in particular, is often something quite phenomenal, and has as much art in it as have the concert performances of our best violinists and pianists. In each case there is the same intensive adaptation of means to an end, the same devotion to the cultivation of technique almost for its own sake. But the opposition between the intuitive and intellectual approach is so strong that the actual technique acquired is fundamentally different also, although (in the case of fiddlers and violinists for instance) the endeavour is applied apparently to exactly the same problem. In some cases, indeed, the cultivation of technique for its own sake is kept at a remarkable level among certain bodies of folk musicians. Some of the Indian vina players, I am told, are phenomenal executants, while in the extraordinary practice of bagpipe music, particularly in sixteenth and seventeenth century Scotland, sheer virtuosity was carried to a pitch which can scarcely be equalled even by the very Paganinis of the concert world. In the Isle of Skye, more especially, the MacCrimmons, hereditary pipers to the MacLeods of Dunvegan, maintained a school of bagpipe music in which only those who were prepared to undergo a preliminary apprenticeship of at least seven years would be accepted as pupils. In this school, the so called classical music of the great Highland bagpipe, *Piobaireachd*, was largely developed. The major portion of this amazing music is no longer maintained in the traditional manner, although a good deal has been preserved in MSS. and printed sources as *Canntaireachd*.⁽²⁾

⁽²⁾ *Canntaireachd*.—A verbal notation for bagpipe music, apparently invented and used in these schools. There were several systems in existence, of which that used by the MacCrimmons has been best preserved. In practice, this notation, although admirably suited to the instrument, is scarcely used at all to-day. See article by J. P. Grant in *MUSIC AND LETTERS* for January, 1925.

But even what remains is so difficult that it can only be attempted by a mere handful of pipers in Scotland to-day. In almost the whole of this music, which is in the theme and variation form, each succeeding variation, generally speaking, is more difficult to play than the last. And, in actual practice, the music itself is so complicated that it is virtually incapable of notation, although this has been attempted, first by Joseph Macdonald as far back as 1760, and since then quite considerably. The extent to which this elaboration was carried will be realised when it is explained that in the Crunluath movements (usually the last and most difficult variation), sometimes as many as eleven and thirteen grace notes were prefixed to certain main notes throughout the tune. This may seem to be affected and unnecessary, and so in some respects I think it to be. But it is explained to some extent by the limitations of the instrument, which, with its open chanter implying a continuous stream of sound, is unable to play even the suggestion of a staccato or to make accentuation in the ordinary way. The burst of grace notes exploding on the accented note gives the accentual effect in a very remarkable and peculiar manner. Be this as it may, I doubt if there are many professional instrumentalists alive to-day who could attain to such feats of virtuosity.

Of course, these are exceptional cases, but it seems more than likely to me that technical skill on other popular instruments was also carried, at one time in their history, to similarly extreme limits. Many fiddlers even to-day have quite remarkable powers of execution, in some cases developed so excessively along certain directions that I am convinced that in the main, it can only be regarded as a corruption or survival from something which at one time was very extensively cultivated. It is thus fairly clear that when our folksong enthusiasts declaim about the disarming artlessness of folk-musicians, they are perpetuating an untruth similar to that insisted on by the literary wisecracks of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who, with the exception of Dryden,⁽³⁾ were quite happily convinced that Shakespeare 'lacked art' and had to be 'polished ere he shone.'

JEFFREY MARK.

(3) Dryden, of course, actually 'polished' many plays of Shakespeare, and only managed to make them 'shine' in certain rather dubious passages. But it is quite clear from his prologues and epilogues to these and other plays, that he had a true conception of the greatness of the Elizabethans, and that, in such things as his adaptations of 'Tempest' and 'Troilus and Cressida' he had his tongue in his cheek and clearly despised the audiences he was commissioned to write them for. Incidentally, his 'All for love' (from 'Antony and Cleopatra') is a very fine piece of work.

STRING CHAMBER MUSIC

THE LESSER COMBINATIONS

By J. ARTHUR WATSON

How much string chamber music is going on in this country to-day?

It is and probably always will be impossible to compile any such statistics as would afford a definite answer to this question: even an approximation is hardly possible. In a musical Utopia there would be an organisation for collecting and tabulating information on the subject, with a view to acting as a guide and director to amateurs of chamber music. Unfortunately, however, it is one of the principal defects of Utopias that they do not occur.

Chamber music is probably the most delectable diversion in which human beings can engage. Certain purely physical enjoyments in which the co-ordination of effort is a feature (as, for instance, rowing) may in some respects be comparable with it; but chamber music is on an altogether higher plane. It demands neither youth nor bodily robustness. It is open to all who can acquire a modest degree of proficiency in the playing of a musical instrument; and it opens up to its amateurs a new world of divine loveliness, full access to which is scarcely possible to the mere listener, even under the delightful guidance of Sir Walford Davies' wireless conversations.

The violin is, of course, the backbone of chamber music. How many violinists are there in this country competent to take a second part without discredit in one of Beethoven's early quartets?

Observations taken over a period of years in a Colonial community in Africa with a shifting population of about 3,500 white inhabitants indicated a proportion of about two to three per thousand of the population. The proportion in England would certainly be lower. Perhaps one per thousand would be a reasonable estimate, which would give 42,000 as the number of moderately competent violinists in Great Britain. This number, which is, of course, little more than a guess, may be taken to include that all too numerous band, the players who have ceased to play owing to the lack of just such an incentive to perseverance as chamber music provides. In any case, it suggests that the number of persons practising the delights of chamber music is quite disproportionate to the number of those capable of doing so.

Beyond all reasonable doubt, the principal reason why the number of string combinations which meet and practise together is so insignificant is the dearth of violas. Apart from combinations including the piano, scarcely any music has been written for combinations not including the viola, which is therefore an indispensable factor in string chamber music.

It is safe to assume that the reason for the dearth of violas is the supposed difficulty of the alto clef. Now this difficulty is really very easily overcome. Any violinist lacking the leisure or energy to master the alto clef in the legitimate way may gain a good working acquaintance with it by the simple, if immoral, expedient of first learning to transpose a third lower, which requires little practice, and then allowing the viola strings, which are a fifth lower than those of the violin, to complete the interval of one seventh, which is the interval between the treble and alto clefs.

The viola is an easier instrument than the violin; in the best chamber music it is given parts that are interesting and by no means difficult; it is satisfying to play, and incapable of causing such spiritual anguish as a violin under maltreatment will produce; and it will almost everywhere open to its votary the door to much better musical company than his attainments warrant. It is obvious, therefore, that every violinist should take up the viola as an alternative instrument. It is so easy and so pleasant, and it is the key to so many mansions of delight.

Where a viola is accessible as well as two violins and a 'cello, the players will require no guide to the compositions available for their enjoyment, so vast and splendid is the body of music, both 'classical' and modern, written for this ideal combination.⁽¹⁾ The same may be said with almost equal truth of the piano trio, in which form all the great composers from Haydn onwards have found inspiration; though, curiously enough, the literature of that much richer combination, the piano quartet, is comparatively scanty. But where one of the instruments is missing, the players may require guidance. An abundance of music for the smaller combinations exists, as the delightful concerts of the Æolian players which are being broadcast have shown; but the knowledge of it is not widely diffused. There is of necessity a certain lack of fullness in compositions written for two instruments only: yet it is difficult to exaggerate the enjoyment which may be derived from working up a good duet with a congenial companion. Music of the highest quality is available. For violin and viola, a transcription of two easy and melodious Beethoven

(1) The catalogues of Mr. E. W. Organ, Acock's Green, Birmingham, cover the entire range of chamber music of all sorts. Annotated as they are with descriptive comments, their study is a liberal education in chamber music.

duets for winds (oboe and bassoon) is a good number to start on. There are a large number of good and moderately easy duets by Bruni, Rolla, Kalliwoða and Pleyel. Much pleasure can be got out of an arrangement of fifty Schubert songs (published by Litolf); and Augeners have an arrangement of the Bach piano preludes which are incomparable as exercises, though sounding strangely unlike the originals.

Among more difficult pieces are a fine duo by Spohr, and a Handel *passacaglia*, arranged by Halvorsen.

But by far the finest music for these instruments is the two duets written by Mozart for Michael Haydn in 1788, just after his marriage. The second, in E flat, with its delicious allegro, is comparable in loveliness of form to the G minor Symphony. Neither of the duets is difficult playing.

For violin and 'cello, besides numerous arrangements of 'classical' masterpieces, there are a notable duo by Kodaly, and the sonata by Ravel on which such conflicting judgments have been passed.

The repertoire for two violins and 'cello includes, according to *Grove's Dictionary*, a surprising number of compositions for these instruments by Haydn and Boccherini. Some at least of these are procurable, though rarely heard. There are two quite enchanting trios in this form by Schubert, both in B flat: these two are also arranged for violin, viola and 'cello. For the rest, the works for this combination, which are not numerous, are chiefly arrangements. Trio music for combinations including a viola is rich in quality, if not in quantity.

It is a remarkable fact that none of the great masters composed anything for two violins and viola. Even Mozart, who experimented on almost every conceivable combination, for some obscure reason left this extremely pleasant and effective one unexplored. However, there are some really first-rate arrangements for these instruments. A charming and almost too simple composition is a transcription of Mozart's trio for two clarinets and bassoon. Easy also and most enjoyable to play are Beethoven's variations on Mozart's song, 'La ci darem,' from 'Don Giovanni' (Breitkopf), and his op. 87 trio (both written originally for two oboes and horn). The latter particularly is Beethoven at his most fascinating, and should be much more often heard. The transcription was sanctioned by the composer himself. There is also a set of terzettes of Bach's (arranged). Music expressly written for this combination includes fine trios by Mazas, Hoffmann, Max Reger and T. F. Dunhill. Three modern compositions of first-rate importance are Dvorak's terzetto and the trios of Kodaly and Taneiev, all magnificent works.

If the players can find another violin, they will derive some

diversion from a bright quartet for three violins and viola—a unique combination—by Ignaz Lachner, who was one of Schubert's intimate friends.

Violin, viola and 'cello are a combination for which a limited number of supremely fine works have been written.

One of the most exhilarating pieces is not an original work, but an arrangement, published within the last few years by Augener, of four fugues by Bach.

Haydn has three attractive trios in this form; but he was eclipsed by Mozart. The Divertimento in E flat (Mozart's master-key) was written in the summer of 1788, the summer which gave birth to the three great symphonies, when the composer, though at the nadir of his fortunes, was at the zenith of his powers. As it is the finest of all compositions for the minor combinations, a brief account of it may not be out of place, though no profusion of superlatives can convey a fraction of its charm.

It is a long work, in six movements, of which it is hard to say which is the most enthralling. A gay and graceful allegro is followed by an adagio, a deeply moving number, grave, but marked by none of the heartache that most of Mozart's later music betrays. The ascending notes of the opening subject seem to express a sense of religious exaltation:—



Next comes the first minuet, subtly reminiscent of the lovely minuet in the E flat quartet, but unlike it, breathing a spirit of serene happiness.

The fourth movement (andante, in B flat) begins with an artless hymn-tune-like air:—



A stormy second subject is followed by a mysterious interlude in the minor key. The major returns in a shower of those rapid descend-

ing scales so characteristic of Mozart. Then comes the inimitably graceful ending. Here are none of those 'sweet broken reminiscences' with which, as Parry says, Mozart loves to close a movement, but the opening melody itself, come back crowned with roses:—



The second minuet is spun like a spider's web round this frail wisp of melody:—



The coda is 'a miracle of design.'

Only by a greater miracle, one would think, could this beautiful work be rounded off without an anti-climax; but it was done, and done triumphantly. The closing allegro is pure sunshine from start to finish. (Like all Mozart's allegros, it is usually taken far too fast.) Of three delicious principal subjects, perhaps the palm should go to the third, in which this ambrosial music culminates—music which will be known and loved long after oblivion has rolled over the head of M. Jean Christophe⁽¹⁾:—



It is natural to suppose that Beethoven was deeply impressed by this work: at any rate, he adopted the same form for his earliest essays in chamber music, the five string trios. The first is only three years later in date than the Divertimento (there are several curious points of superficial resemblance between the two) and on

(1) This worthy described Mozart as 'a little German bourgeois, who chattered and wept about trifles'—see *Jean Christophe*, last volume.

the whole is almost more Mozartian than Beethovenish. It is interesting to observe Beethoven's leonine power developing progressively in the subsequent trios. That in C minor is the strongest and maturest. The serenade in D is probably the best known, but suffers by comparison with the others. If these trios are excelled in sheer beauty by the *Divertimento*, the margin is not wide, and they are certainly scarcely less satisfactory to play.

Mention should be made of an attractive trio by Enesco, introducing the Roumanian National Anthem; and a slight but tuneful arietta in more modern idiom by Felix White.

Two trios by Reger and one by Dohnanyi are among the finest works for this combination.

Pieces written for piano, violin and viola are not so numerous as might be expected. There are arrangements of some beautiful Russian songs by Glinka and Balakirev. A 'Grand Trio' by I. Lachner will be found, if not grand, at least melodious and entertaining. Martini's 'Gavotte des Moutons' is a charming trifle. A sonata by Leclair in the old contrapuntal style is graceful and interesting. Schumann's romantic 'Märchenerzählung' has earned greater popularity than any other work in this form. Brahms' great horn trio is scored with viola part as alternative to the horn: but the final movement of this noble work requires wind rather than strings. Mozart's E flat trio (with clarinet part as alternative part to the violin) is perhaps the masterpiece for this combination. It requires a fine pianist, and a better still is needed for the piano setting of the same master's *Symphonie Concertante* for violin and viola. T. F. Dunhill's trio is a more modern and a more modest but highly attractive piece. More difficult are the trios by Reger and Arnold Bax, which are works of great beauty and interest. Schubert's superb piano trios (Op. 99 and 100) have been arranged most successfully for these instruments. A famous gramophone record has been taken of the former, with Lionel Tertis as the violist. The Russian, Paul Juon, has written trios for this combination which are said to be fine music.

The combination of piano and two violins lends itself to effects of counterpoint rather than rich harmony, and it is therefore not surprising that the best works for these instruments are those of Handel and Bach. Of a number of sonatas by Handel, that in G minor stands out by reason of the ravishing beauty of its two slow movements. Bach's concerto for two violins is of course one of the mountain-tops of all music.

In conclusion, what can be done for the forlorn viola and cello who are unable to find a violin? Not much; but there is a remarkable

jeu d'esprit by Beethoven—'Duette mit zwei obligaten Augengläsern' (Peters) for these instruments unaccompanied, which will afford them an amusing evening. (It contains a curious reminiscence of the 'Marseillaise.') If a pianist can be secured, they may find enjoyment in a trio by E. Hartmann, and proceed to Brahms's splendid clarinet trio, which gives a viola part as alternative to the clarinet.

Nothing has been composed for minor combinations including more than one viola or cello, for the sufficient reason that better effects could be achieved by other means. A possible exception is that of one viola and two cellos, or two violas and one cello, which might conceivably be used effectively within a limited range. For the rest, however, this little list, which aims at being representative rather than exhaustive or in any way critical, will be found to cover every possible combination of bow-played strings—apart from the double bass—consisting of fewer than four instruments. Not all of these combinations are equally effective, and none rival the perfection of the quartet and the quintet; but every one of them has a special interest of its own, and the works written for them are a priceless portion of our musical heritage.

J. A. WATSON.

HACKNEYED MUSIC

IF ever any one of us wishes utterly to condemn a piece of music and to cast it for ever beyond the pale, the safest way of doing so is to call it 'hackneyed.' If that epithet has once been applied to any work by a real leader of thought, the timid shrinking amateur will not even dare to hint that he likes it. But it rarely occurs to anyone to ask what is really meant by 'hackneyed' in this connection, and whether any given piece of music comes under this description.

It ought to mean anything stale by frequent repetition. So far the matter is simple enough, but the question which is not easy to answer is: When does repetition become too frequent? Most people who use language with any precision seem, if subconsciously, to realise that a more respectful word should be applied to the great masterpieces which, when all is said and done, still remain the most familiar compositions. I myself cannot remember, for instance, ever having heard the word applied to any one of Beethoven's symphonies, but it has often enough in my hearing been applied to the piano concertos, even the 'Emperor,' by people who ought to know better. I do not think anybody uses the word very freely in connection with Bach, but it would be very difficult to mention any other composer who has not been branded as the writer of over-familiar music. Curiously enough one does not hear it often, if at all, about the composer whose name appears oftener than any other in concert programmes—namely, Chopin.

The curious question arises, why is it that, if a Beethoven concerto or a Tchaikovsky symphony or a Puccini opera may be called 'hackneyed,' no one ever thinks of making the same accusation against that noblest of vocal epics 'Ole Man River,' or that beautiful outpouring of homely sentiment 'Sonny Boy'? It must be remembered that for one opportunity the world has of hearing a Beethoven concerto, it must have at least a thousand of hearing either of these songs, which are mentioned because at the moment it is they that are most frequently sung and played and, incidentally be it said, murdered in the British Isles. Is it then merely that the class of listeners to whom Beethoven appeals is more fastidious and gets to the bottom of the intellectual and emotional meaning of music more quickly than those who listen to the songs of the 'Sonny Boy' type?

And let it not be forgotten that the lovers of Spirituals and the *chefs d'œuvre* of musical comedy are just as contemptuous of the chestnuts of yesterday or last week, as anybody else.

This leads to the consideration that obviously the word must have different meanings to different people, and this in turn leads to the conclusion that no one will agree that music which he or she thinks really great could ever become too well known, for there are tens of thousands of people who really do honestly think 'Ole Man River' and 'Sonny Boy' are great music.

There is another thing to be considered. Some music may be unduly familiar in one place and unduly neglected in another, according to the caprice, the convictions or the business instincts of those who control the supply for the time being. Some years ago I came across a good example of this. I read in a German paper an account of a performance of 'The Messiah' in a town of some musical importance. It was said that this was the first performance of the work in that city for thirty years. Now, while it might be possible to say that in the North, indeed, in every part of England, 'The Messiah' is unduly familiar, no one could possibly pretend that 'The Messiah' was 'hackneyed' in that German city. Similarly, some years ago Sir Henry Wood was asked for a Russian programme in some continental city, and he conducted some of the compositions of Tchaikovsky, which he has helped to make familiar to every musical person, and a great many unmusical ones, in England. An earnest young English admirer had accompanied him on his trip and wrote to a paper in England that it was a pity that Sir Henry Wood should have introduced himself to such a musical centre in so hackneyed a programme; whereupon a member of the local committee retorted that they had chosen the programme specially from Russian works which had not been heard by them before.

There are some people in London, possibly, too, in other parts of England, who think we have heard enough of 'The Ring.' Into that question I will not enter; but the other day a Professor at one of our Colleges asked his class, which consisted of twenty-five young men and young women, how many of them had ever heard 'The Ring' right through, and how often. There was only one member of that class who had heard the whole tetralogy, and that only once.

Another little experience of my own once proved to me how strictly local a thing over-familiarity of any given piece of music may be. I was once at a Promenade Concert at Queen's Hall and happened to find myself next to a well-known professional musician of an important Lancashire town. The programme contained one of the symphonies which English concert-goers, and especially London

musical critics, knew perhaps as well as any work in the classical repertory: the G minor Symphony of Mozart. My neighbour said that he was delighted at the opportunity of hearing this symphony which had never come his way since his childhood, so rarely was it played in his native town.

At the time when the Tchaikovsky vogue was at its height in London, it became a commonplace of musical criticism to say that the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies of Tchaikovsky were the stalest in the repertory. On one occasion I took the trouble to examine all the records of orchestral concerts in London during the season, and I found that the 'Pathetic' had been in only five programmes. Similar figures will be found with regard to the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven and the Unfinished of Schubert. This may be too much for the unfortunate musical critic whose duty it is to try to hear every performance, but there must have been in London at the time thousands or more people in the same condition as my friend of the Mozart symphony, who had not heard it often enough to satiate their appetite. There are many in every audience to-day in the same parlous state. This is a thing which all people who speak slightly of over-familiarity in music should remember; nor should they forget that young people are always growing up who have not had chances of hearing much music; and also that in a city like London there is a constant stream of music lovers from the provinces and from overseas who are thirsting to make the acquaintance of masterpieces which are perhaps over-familiar to us.

The word 'hackneyed' is used more often in connection with operas perhaps than with anything else in this country and oftener than it is applied to anything operatic in other countries. One reason obviously is that in all English cities, even in London, we have to take our opera in such concentrated doses. Take, for instance, Wagner. In the last few years our annual allowance of Wagner has been crowded into about four weeks, and we have two 'Rings' in the space of the month. One 'Ring' a year is, possibly, starvation: two every year is not a generous diet: but two in twenty-eight days is a diet which puts a strain on the musical digestion.

Having now attempted to describe what music does not deserve to be called 'hackneyed,' the time has come to describe the music that is 'hackneyed.' It may be laid down safely as a general rule that the music of which people tire most quickly is that which is welcomed at the time of its production as answering best the requirements of that moment. This is almost such a platitude that it is hardly necessary to insist on it. An instance is ready to hand from the experiences of the last year or two. I am referring to the amazing, almost unprecedented success of the opera 'Jonny spielt auf' in

Germany during the last two years, of which we were told that it was 'the best possible expression of the mind of to-day.' Now, after one season and a half, during which it spread over the length and breadth of all German speaking countries like wildfire, it is absolutely dead. This is, of course, an extreme instance, but speaking generally, the more up-to-date any music is supposed to be, the shorter is its life. Conversely, the music which has the longest life is that which is at the time of its creation looked upon either as in advance of its time or lacking the definite characteristics of any time. In discussing this branch of the subject, one must also bear in mind that local conditions have a great deal to do with the chances of any composition being heard oftener than the digestion of the musical public can stand. To take a homely metaphor, the old saying 'Toujours perdrix' applies very strongly to music. We may carry it a little further. The season for asparagus lasts from six to eight weeks, and at the end of the time our appetite for it has grown smaller and smaller, whereas the season for beef and mutton lasts from January 1 to December 31, and they are always popular. So it is with music. Music that is exotic and highly spiced quickly outstays its welcome, at any rate more quickly than music that has none, or fewer, external characteristics which strike the hearer at once—in other words, that which we conveniently call classical.

The fact that each country has its own music of which it does not tire and that other countries soon have enough of it, does not necessarily contradict this theory; on the contrary, it is rather evidence in its favour, because the characteristics which are common and natural in one country and therefore tend to permanence, are in any other country exotic and perhaps merely unnecessary. One need only think of the highly flavoured music of the type which is generally known as national. We all like a certain amount of Spanish and Russian music, but it soon becomes tedious to British ears. The incisive rhythms of the South soon weary the Englishman or the German, just as the Latin races after a short time consider the national music of Germany and England, which have lasting lives in their own countries, as stodgy and four-square. English and German opera-goers, for instance, cannot understand the lasting popularity of some apparently immortal French and Italian operas, just as the lasting popularity of some German operas is a riddle to Italians and Spaniards. This applies even to the very greatest works of every school, though naturally it is truer of music of the second class. In fact, I think it may be said with some truth that the time it takes for the world to get tired of music is on the whole the safest criterion for distinguishing the first class from the second. This is more or less what Richard Strauss meant when he wrote once that

the musical critic should not concern himself with attempting to discriminate between the first and the second class of music, because time would determine their places; it was the critic's duty to try to point out the differences between the third and, say, the tenth class. But to this class, too, the same tests apply, though that is another story.

The conclusion of the whole matter then is this: It is impossible to give a definition, which holds everywhere, at every time and for every person, of the word 'hackneyed' in connection with music. What is 'hackneyed' in one place will be fresh in another. What one person thinks hackneyed will have a constant appeal to another, and music which at one time seems likely to maintain its freshness, will at another time seem as stale as the remainder biscuit. One would like to be able to say that the worst class of sentimental popular music is thought hackneyed, but there are so many people, not only in the British Isles but in every part of the world, who never seem to get tired of it.

A. KALISCH.

MUSICAL REPRODUCTION, GRAMOPHONE AND BROADCAST

THE whole art of musical recording and reproduction has made immense strides during the last few years and this is chiefly due to the work of radio engineers and scientists who have devoted themselves to research, particularly in connection with broadcasting.

With the advent of broadcasting many people imagined that the gramophone was doomed. Actually, as is well known, broadcasting has immensely stimulated the gramophone, and that for two reasons. First, without question, it has very greatly increased musical appreciation. As an example, I was on a business visit to a certain house recently and the owner had just purchased books of records of such things as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. I happened to show some acquaintance with classical music and was promptly asked whether this appreciation followed from my radio work or preceded it. My questioner stated that in his case it was the result of broadcasting.

Secondly, the electrical technique used in broadcasting has been appropriated by the gramophone recorders, resulting in an extraordinary improvement in the records themselves, and if the benefit of this electrical recording is to be obtained by the user, radio-type amplifiers and loud speakers must be used for reproduction in place of the direct method of diaphragm and horn formerly, and still most generally, employed.

Broadly speaking the pre-radio method of recording consisted in placing the performers in front of a large horn or trumpet which collected the sounds and concentrated them on a diaphragm carrying a stylus. The vibrations of the diaphragm were recorded on a disc which became the master record from which copies were then derived in various ways.

Such a horn, unless very large, excluded all deep tones and, further, it had local resonances which would tend to emphasise certain frequencies whenever they occurred, besides a general echo which would confuse the sounds and give a blurred effect. The performers must be near enough to produce an adequately loud record and in the case of large orchestras the disposition of the instruments was a matter of difficulty. To record an organ, as may be imagined, was almost an impossibility. But even supposing that under studio conditions these difficulties were largely overcome, the method of reproducing

by stylus, diaphragm and horn would present similar difficulties. The horn, unless many feet in length and very carefully designed and constructed, would give no bass and would introduce distortion due to resonances. The diaphragm, clamped round its edge, also causes distortion both in recording and reproduction. Its movements must be sufficiently ample to give the required volume of sound directly and this necessitates working it far beyond the degree of distortionless reproduction.

The primary contribution of the radio technician to these problems was the valve amplifier. This is a device for producing an enlarged or amplified copy of an electrical disturbance relatively undistorted. Indeed a radio receiver and amplifier has been constructed in this country which gives a 'voltage amplification'—that is, an enlarged copy of the input—amounting to nearly half a million times with quite negligible distortion. Armed with this new weapon the recorders substituted for the horn, diaphragm and stylus, a microphone and an amplifier. The microphone is similar in principle to that used in the ordinary telephone, though many different designs have been used. It is a device by means of which sound vibrations falling upon a diaphragm cause variations in an electric current corresponding in frequency and amplitude to the sounds. Since these electrical variations can be amplified without distortion to an almost unlimited extent several highly desirable results follow. In the first place the trumpet for concentrating the sound waves on the diaphragm can be discarded; the performers can be placed at a reasonable distance from the microphone, which can occupy a position corresponding to the best seat in a concert hall; the microphone itself can be designed for distortionless performance rather than mere energy efficiency, and it need not be overloaded. The amplified electrical energy operates the recording stylus in the usual way.

It will I think, be clear to the non-technical, that the valve amplifier has swept away a whole host of difficulties and given us, in electrical recording, something much nearer perfection.

Considering now reproduction, whether from gramophone records or broadcast, it is again the valve amplifier which permits distortionless reproduction at almost any required volume.

In the case of the gramophone an electrical 'pick-up' is substituted for the usual reproducer and can be carried on the same tone arm. This device is usually magnetic, the needle being arranged to vibrate a small iron armature in the neighbourhood of a magnet carrying coils of wire in which as a result, electrical potentials are induced. These are feeble, but they are subsequently amplified to the required degree and the reproduction is by means of an ordinary loud speaker. Anyone possessed of a radio receiver can readily adapt it for use with

a gramophone, with greatly improved results, always provided that the said receiver is properly designed. Unhappily, relatively few of the receivers at present in existence give anything approaching distortionless reproduction. None the less, instruments can be obtained having a 'response' which is constant over practically the whole range of audible sound. That is to say, the amplifier, or the complete instrument in the case of a radio receiver, responds equally to any musical note from the deepest organ pipe to the highest harmonic audible to the human ear. It is true that even the best amplifiers show a falling off at the upper and lower limits of sound when tested electrically, but as the human ear is said to be unable to observe changes in intensity of less than 20 per cent., an instrument which only shows this diminution at the limits may be said to be a perfect amplifier for practical purposes, and it will reproduce a full orchestra, with drums and basses causing the floor and furniture to tremble, whilst at the same time it distinguishes the timbre of fiddle, flute and reed in the highest register. Instruments of this class are of necessity large and heavy, and bear to portable and other small receivers a relation comparable with that of a grand piano to one of those tuning fork instruments which no doubt have their place in river punts or war dug-outs. Indeed, the comparison is apt as regards bulk, price and musical quality. Most people, unfortunately, judge of broadcasting without ever having heard what it can really be, and the infinite pains taken by the B.B.C. at the transmitting end—and I believe their transmissions are technically better than any others in the world—are rendered vain in the great majority of cases, just as the best gramophone record would not yield its stored beauty if run over by the home made reproducer of childhood comprising the lid of a tooth powder tin, a diaphragm of cardboard and a pin.

The home listener, then, can now obtain the benefit of the almost perfect radio transmitter, the almost perfect receiver and amplifier, and the extraordinarily good gramophone record. There remains the loud speaker, and this requires an article to itself. Until recently it was by far the weakest link in the chain. Even now it is probably here that the greatest advance remains to be made, since it is hardly possible to improve upon the *measured* perfection of the best amplifier.

H. R. RIVERS-MOORE.

REGISTER OF BOOKS ON MUSIC

THE following list contains a selection of recent books on music. Unless otherwise stated, the year of publication is 1929. All prices quoted are net, and in the case of foreign books the price given is that at which the cheapest edition can be purchased in the country in which the book is published. At the present rates of exchange (May 20), ten French francs = 1s. 7½d.; ten Swiss francs = 7s. 11d.; ten German marks = 9s. 10d.; ten Austrian shillings = 5s. 9½d.; ten Italian lire = 2s. 2d.; ten Dutch florins = 16s. 7d.; and ten Swedish kroner = 11s. 0d.

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Schumann. Nink, M.: *Schumann und die Romantik in der Musik*. pp. 112. N. Kampmann: Heidelberg. 3 M. 50.

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Song. Vetter, W. *Das frühdeutsche Lied*. Ausgewählte Kapitel aus der Entwicklungsgeschichte und Aesthetik des ein- und mehrstimmigen deutschen Kunstliedes im 17. Jahrhundert. 2 Bd. pp. xv. 251, xli. 159. Helios Verlag: Münster i. W., 1928. 24 M.

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Violin. Kleverkau, P.: *Die Konstruktion des Geigenkörpers aus den Teillängen der Saiten*. pp. 32. P. de Wit: Leipzig. 1 M. 80.

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Romer, A.: *Geigenbaumeister Adolf Romer*. Sein Leben und Schaffen, von ihm selbst erzählt. pp. 32. A. Romer: Freiburg i. Br. 1 M.

Winkler, J.: *Die Technik des Geigenspiels*. Tl. 6. Analysen ausgewählter Etuden. Vermehrte Neuausgabe, mit einem Notenanhang. pp. 80. 17. L. Doblinger: Wien, 1928. 3 M.

Vivaldi. Salvatori, A.: *Antonio Vivaldi—il prete rosso—note biografiche*. Venice, 1928. [Reprinted from the 'Rivista della Città di Venezia'.]

Voice. Averkamp, A.: *Des sangkunst en hare sterron*. J. P. Kruseman: The Hague. 5 Fl. 25.

Bitterling, W.: *Am Ende ist die Vokalform*. Die Auflösung des jahrhundertalten Gesangsrätsels. pp. 60. J. H. Robolsky: Leipzig. 6 M.

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Wagner. Dumesnil, R.: *Richard Wagner*. pp. 96. Ed. Rieder. 16 fr. [Maitres de la musique ancienne et moderne. no. 2.]

Gysi P.: *Richard Wagner und die Schweiz*. pp. 131. Huber & Co. Frauenfeld. 3 fr.

Petrucchi, G.: *Manuale wagneriano*. Terza edizione. Corticelli: Milan, 1928. 25 L.

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LIST OF BOOKS RECEIVED

Mason, D. G. *The Dilemma of American Music*. The Macmillan Company, New York.

Jackson, Hugh and Forsyth, Gilbert. *The Amateur Producer's Guide*. Paxton and Co. 8s. 6d. net.

Rosenthal, Ethel. *Indian Music and Indian Instruments*. Wm. Reeves. 7s. 6d. net.

Rusette, L. E. de. *Children's Percussion Bands*. Kegan, Paul. 3s. 6d. net.

Flower, Newman. *G. F. Handel*. Cassell. 3s. 6d. net.

Fuller-Maitland, J. A. *Bach's Brandenburg Concertos*. 'The Musical Pilgrim.' London: Humphrey Milford. 1s. 6d. net.

Vallas, Leon. *The Theories of Claude Debussy*. London: Humphrey Milford. 6s. 6d. net.

Vermell, Edmond. *Beethoven*. Paris: Rieder.

Dumesnil, René. *R. Wagner*. Paris: Rieder.

Henebry, Richard. *Handbook of Irish Music*. Cork: University Press.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

The Story of the Flute. By H. Macaulay Fitzgibbon. Reeves. The Music Story Series.

This little book is full of information based on research, grave and gay, told simply and quickly. It will be of considerable interest to flute players, and of interest to any who care to read about all branches of music, flutes included. It is more general, and, we must add, less scholarly, than Welch's book on the Recorder—it is, of course, not covering the same ground—but it does not go to the root of a question in the same way, nor always give its sources. On the other hand, the chapters on Boehm and Gordon, on Famous Flautists, and on the Flute in the orchestra, are really valuable, as well as the preface. With a view to a second edition the musical examples might be attended to. On page 106 the alto clef is printed for the tenor; page 117, insufficient directions are given to enable the example to be read; page 156, the abbreviation of the first example is misleading, and an accidental is omitted in the second; page 175, there are semi-quavers for demi-semis. Jehan Tabourot appears as Taburet, which spoils the anagram with Thoinot Arbeau, and a derivation for "flute" is accepted which, as Welch stated, is philologically impossible.⁽¹⁾

A. H. F. S.

Eurydice or The nature of opera. By Dyneley Hussey. Kegan Paul. 2s. 6d. net.

The author of this little book has done well in the short space at his disposal. The task was an almost impossible one: to give some idea of the nature of a hybrid art and, since the book forms one of a series entitled 'To-day and To-morrow,' to point to a possible future. Any book purporting to deal with this subject must lay itself open to attack unless it can say definitely what laws govern opera. Until those have been discovered there can really be no discussion of the nature of opera. Along with most other writers Mr. Hussey finds it impossible to say what these laws are. He feels their presence, and when he says '... we must accept the premiss that opera is a definite and independent form governed by laws which do not necessarily apply either to music or drama' our minds reach out with his. But into the void. The vexed question of who is to be lawgiver remains of

(1) The following is the substance of some information supplied by Mr. E. G. R. Waters:—

Two early French forms are known: (1) *flakute* (12th cent.) or *flaute*, or *flaute*, and (2) *flaute* (13th cent.) or *flaute*. Both the *h* and the *s* are merely graphic. The *s* is probably on the analogy of O.F. *feste*, Lat. *fistula* (thus, *fistellum*, *festel*, *frestel*, *festel*). Both *flakute* and *flaute* are feminine.

(3) Old Provençal has *flaut* (13th cent.) and *flautol*, both masculine. (4) It has also *flauja* (=flute), and O.F. has *flajol* (Lat. *flabellum*, 'a blast,' *flabeolum*, cf. Fr. *flageolet*). No *flaute* (feminine), to connect with the O.F., has been found in Provençal. Pending further information it seems best to assume, for the derivation of *flaute*, a contamination of Prov. *flauja* by Prov. *laüt* (=lute) from Arab. *al-ūd*, producing *fla-ut* (*t* sounded).

prime importance, and remains unanswered. Mr. Hussey contents himself, and interests us, by citing a number of cases illustrative of how different composers treat a situation. He is most near the truth when saying that 'Opera is so diverse in its incarnations . . . that it is difficult to discover any formula which will fit methods so diverse as those of Handel and Wagner, Mozart and Puccini.' There is, it must be owned, nothing very enlightening in such a remark. However, as he himself says, he is in good company in his failure, and he has done it in less words than most.

Beethoven's quartets. By Joseph de Marliave. Translated by Hilda Andrews. London: Humphrey Milford. 18s. net.

Not the least important fact about this book is that the author mostly limits himself to a discussion of the actual music, its form and the way effects are obtained. By that means he escapes that fatal descriptive discursiveness which tempts most writers on music. Not altogether. There are a few passages such as: 'Tinged with agonised entreaty, this heartfelt prayer. . . . But they are an exception, and the book is made safe for those who want to know something about the string quartets. The analysis is, as far as a random enquiry allows us to say, quite sound. The quartets are taken in chronological order, the movements are taken to pieces, and there are numerous musical illustrations. An index would have helped.

Beethoven the creator. By Romain Rolland. Translated by Ernest Newman. Gollancz. 105s. net, and 30s. net.

'And now that I have tried to indicate some of the hidden ways of the creative spirit in the construction of this first movement, let me dream my interpretation of it before you! It pleases you professional musicians to turn up your noses at all interpretations. But your works would not be listened to unless the tissue of their rhythmic and sonorous combinations suggested a web of successive and connected emotions to those who listen to them. . . . In dreams is often divination; one sees better with the eyelids closed.' That is the author of 'Jean-Christophe' speaking, one side, that is, of Romain Rolland's nature. The other side, exemplified in the 'Musiciens d'autrefois' and the 'Voyage musical au pays du passé,' is responsible for the better part of this extensive study of Beethoven. The difficulty for most readers will be felt in a perpetual contention between two methods, the one poetic, the other scientific. The first produces page after page of eloquent dissertation, within which some very fine writing is enclosed, that tells us little about Beethoven, much about the author, and makes us admire him the more for his enthusiasm. But it is as a musicologist that Romain Rolland really has something fresh to say. His analysis of certain pages of Beethoven's notebooks is masterly. He leads the reader through the apparent tangle of those hasty sketches in such a way as to make all clear, showing the provenance of the movements among the sonatas and symphonies chosen for discussion. With keen intelligence he points out the path for the student to follow whose interest in the notebooks has been aroused. He is so persuasive as to convince the reader that the only possible subject worthy of attention is the tracing of Beethoven's development in the notebooks, firing him with a desire which, in this excellent translation, is most infectious. Furthermore the author has had

access to new material that has to do with Thérèse von Brunsvik, research whose result is embodied in one of the important appendices. Another of these is taken up with a close enquiry into the cause of Beethoven's deafness. And lastly, the more musicianly reader will find in the large number of notes at the end of the book a great deal of real usefulness. Two points remain to be mentioned. They have to do with the actual edition. Firstly, the unusually hideous dust-cover must be burned at sight. Secondly, the particularly attractive musical illustrations of the original are reproduced. In a discussion of the notebooks it is delightful to have textual examples in manuscript form (as long as they are as clear as these) which look as though they themselves came from a sketch book, not from a printer's desk.

Sc. G.

REVIEWS OF PERIODICALS

De Musik. Amsterdam. March.

Dr. Kurt Singer, writing on the history of orchestral conducting, puts forward a theory that the great conductors have always been great interpreters. He sees in modern music a more and more mechanical style of utterance, which asks correspondingly less of the older romantic method of conducting, where the conductor definitely imposed his own 'reading' of a work on the players. The state of the interpretative conductor will wax or wane according as this newer outlook on music weakens or strengthens. Heer Pijper has an article on the writing of musical history in which he examines Gray's 'Survey of contemporary music.'

April.

There is an unpublished letter of Wagner's, reproduced in facsimile, which has to do with a performance in Amsterdam of 'Tannhäuser,' and his payment, or rather non-payment, for it. The famous Dutch musical society, 'Tot bevordering der toonkunst,' has reached a first centenary this year, and the present number is largely given over to articles to do with the activities of this powerful body.

La Rassegna Musicale. Turin. March.

In an article based on a study of Baldensperger's 'Mouvement des idées dans l'émigration française,' Sig. P. P. Trompeo discusses the relationship between music and French romanticism. Sig. Petrinì has an article on the nature of opera, occasioned by the writings of Giannotto Bastianelli. There is an analytical description of Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonata, op. 111, by Sig. Luigi Perrachio, which is good in so far as it keeps to technicalities. Dr. Gieringer continues his discussion of those Dutch and Flemish paintings which contain references to music.

April.

Until now the birthplace and date of birth of Orazio Vecchi have been a matter of conjecture. A certificate of baptism has been unearthed which, according to Sig. G. Roncaglia who has an article

on this subject, has settled Modena as the birthplace, 1550 as the year of birth, and the actual date some time near December 6, the date of the certificate.

Musica d'Oggi. Milan. February.

The vigorous renewal of interest in Verdi that is now taking place in Germany is discussed by Dr. Göhler, who sees therein only another example of Germany's ability to show other countries where their own best music is to be found. The Liceo which Rossini provided for in his will and which was founded at Pesaro is described in an historical survey by Sig. Lancellotti.

Musikblätter des Anbruch. Vienna. January.

There is an interesting article on Wagner by the writer Bloch (not the composer). It is the composer Ernst Krenek who writes in this number his thoughts on the Schubert centenary. Alfredo Casella tells of his latest work founded on themes from Scarlatti, as he calls him. He means Domenico, but it is curious to find loose nomenclature of this kind in an article by one of the foremost Italian musicians.

February.

Herr Ernest Krenek discusses differences in the way Frenchmen and the Germans take their music, finding that as a people Germans allow a greater place to music. Herr Stuckenschmidt's article on Erik Satie does not say anything very fresh. Herr Kurt Westphal manages to do more with a discussion on Scriabin's harmony.

March.

A number taken up with discussion of light music. There are articles on revue and operetta by Krenek and Hans Redlich. Herr Herbert Graf's illustrated article on new methods of staging is very interesting. Herr Wiesengrund-Adorno's amusing article on modern popular songs is worth reading.

April.

Herr Eberhard Preussner contributes a useful short article on Krenek. Herr Kurt Westphal's article on the sonata and modern methods is the best thing in the number. It attempts to arrive at a conclusion as to the value of the form of the sonata in present-day composition. The question of what formal basis music is to have in the future is an important one. The problem will be solved, but how it is difficult to see.

Pult und Taktstock. Vienna. January.

Herr Alfred Szendrei's article on the conductorless orchestra is informative, and interesting for its description of the work in this direction of the Leipzig symphony orchestra. There is a useful article on choral rehearsals by Herr H. F. Redlich. The habit of including articles by composers which aid conductors in studying new works is a good one. Such articles there are here by Krenek, Butting and others.

Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft. Leipzig. February.

A great deal of research lies behind Herr Friedrich Sennrich's long article on 'International mediæval melodies,' which deserves to be given careful attention. The author discusses, with much learning and with the help of plentiful musical illustrations, the dissemination of melodies and rhythms over Europe in the middle ages. There is an article by Herr Benedikt Szabolksi on eighteenth century Hungarian choral music.

March.

The article on 'International mediæval melodies' is concluded. M. André Pirro, of Paris, contributes a notice on three little known fifteenth century French musicians: Antoine Brumel, Louis van Pullaer and Crispin van Stappen. An informative article comes from Herr Gustav Fellerer on vocal church music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Herr Jón Leif's article on Icelandic folksongs is also a useful contribution.

April.

The number opens with a learned disquisition by Herr Marius Schneider on the Hocket (truncatio). A delightful paper follows on Boccaccio's Decamerone as a source of information about music, by Herr Hanns Gurman. There is also a long article on the fifteenth century basse danse by Herr Erich Hertzmann.

La Revue Musicale. Paris. February.

Phillipe de Vitry, bishop of Meaux and correspondent of Petrarque is the subject of an excellent article by M. A. Machabey. Alexandre Tansman, living Polish composer, is treated of by M. R. Petit. There is a further instalment of M. Charles Kœchlin's rather vague treatise on sensibility in modern music.

March.

M. P. Lang's article on the lute is worth reading. It seems to be backed by extensive knowledge of the subject. The same may be said of an article on modern organs in France by M. Norbert Dufoureq. It is hardly necessary to mention that this contains many repetitions of the name Cavallé-Coll. M. Landry writes entertainingly on 'Le pouvoir des sons,' a better attempt in this style than most. There are also some new Verdi letters.

April.

This is a special number honouring Albert Roussel, with articles by Prunières, Arthur Hoérée, Paul le Flem, Nadia Boulanger and others. There is a musical supplement which includes homage-compositions by Poulenc, Honegger, Tansman, Jacques Ibert among other famous names.

Revue de Musicologie. Paris. February.

M. Carl Allan Moberg's documented article on Jean Desfontaines, 'a forgotten composer of Lully's school,' is meant for the antiquarian. M. André Tessier supplies some interesting notes on this subject. M. E. Borrel has a paper on Rameau's ideas as to the interpretation of Lully's works. There are the usual reviews of foreign books.

including one by M. Machabey of Dom Anselm Hughes's ' Worcester mediæval Harmony.'

The Musical Quarterly. New York. April.

Harry Alan Potamkin's article on the movies discusses what music can do in the cinema, and what to do with it when it has got there. The 'talkie' seems, for the moment, to have done music out of one of its jobs. In New York they have what are called 'Little cinemas' where quality is insisted upon. The writer thinks that in those abodes of high art the 'talkie' will not be allowed to penetrate, and that there music will have a chance to show its paces as a real accompaniment to the best type of films. Perhaps. 'Casanova and music' by Paul Nettle is bright and amusing. J. G. Prod'homme's 'Austro-German composers in France in the eighteenth century' has some useful facts in it.

Sc. G.

Revista musical catalana. Barcelona.

The April number is of especial interest to English musicians, owing to a long article on Dr. Vaughan Williams—one of the most intelligent and sympathetic accounts of an English composer that can ever have appeared in a foreign paper. Catalonia is not a country of choral societies, and outdoor music, for nothing!

Gaceta musical. Paris.

The number for January and February (the last for the time being) is worth reading for the account of José Manuel Jiménez Berroa, the black Cuban pianist who lived for many years in Hamburg, where he died in 1917.

J. B. T.

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

The following abbreviations are used: [Y.B.P.] Year Book Press, [O.U.P.] Oxford University Press, [Cra]mer, [Aug]ener, [K.P.] Keith Prowse, [St]ainer and Bell, [W.R.] Winthrop Rogers, [Ch]ester.

Choral Music. Religious.

There heads the list a Te Deum in G by Vaughan Williams [O.U.P.] which was written for the enthronement service in Canterbury Cathedral of the new Archbishop. It is a fine work, needs some careful preparation, but though the part-writing is manifold a small choir would find it within its scope, as regards numbers. Noel Ponsonby's Service in D [Cra.] is possibly more within the reach of the ordinary small church choir and would be worth doing well. Harold Darke's Magnificat and Nunc Dimitis in A minor [Cra.] the same, for unaccompanied voices, with some interesting writing to make a reasonable problem for the most able type of village choir. Dr. Daymond's Magnificat and Nunc Dimitis is for women's or boys' voices, unaccompanied [Y.B.P.]. It will not be difficult to sing provided care is taken with intonation. Among anthems there is a motet for double choir (S.A.T.B.) by Hubert Middleton [Y.B.P.] which looks good, and is harmonically simple enough for most choirs. 'Jerusalem on high' is a 'congregational hymn-anthem' by Alan Gray [O.U.P.], a type of composition which, for the uninitiated, may be described as that in which the congregation, having heard a hymn tune given out by the choir, takes its part in the second and all further verses. A descant is then added by the choir proper. It needs an alive congregation to do this. 'All creatures of our God and king' by E. T. Chapman [Y.B.P.] is an anthem for festival uses, or at least for a large body of singers. The writing is straightforward and diatonic. Norman Demuth's motet for double choir 'Humanity' [O.U.P.] is perhaps more for the choral society than the choir. It should be effective. Three unaccompanied part songs for female voices by Anne Megarey are for the same kind of occasion.

Choral Music. Secular.

There is a large amount of part-songs to be dealt with. This style of composition never seems to cease its steady flow from the printing presses. Judging by the quantity of material put before the public each year there appears always to be a market for secular part-songs, and for new ones at that. The best of this batch shall be taken first. Edgar L. Bainton's 'Weep no more' [Y.B.P.] for two sopranos and a contralto has character. Peter Warlock's 'I saw a fair maiden' [O.U.P.] is a carol (really this is only half secular) written (for S.A.T.B.) pleasantly, asking a good deal of alertness from the singers, interesting to work at. A four-part male voice (TT.BB.) setting by Granville Bantock of Newbolt's 'Fighting Téméraire' is full of effects,

fit to puzzle even the best singers. A setting of Robert Bridge's 'The earth loveth the spring' by Paul Edmonds [Cra.] looks good and sounds well, even played over on a pianoforte. Ernest Bullock, in 'There's none to soothe my soul' [Cra.] has written a part-song (S.A.T.B.) which is above the average for the smooth movement of parts and the pleasant simple sound of it. Nothing there to daunt a choral society. It should be sung unaccompanied. 'Come live with me' by D. Wauchope Stewart [Y.B.P.] is nice enough, but a little tame. So also 'Frolic' by H. Hollinrake, and 'In a valley' by Hubert Middleton [both Y.B.P.]. There is nothing wrong with these latter, but they say little that could not as well be expressed without the aid of music, sharing this negative quality with nearly all that remains of the pile of part-songs before us. Julius Harrison's three part-songs 'Willie, prithee go to bed,' 'The violet,' 'Come o'er the bourn' [W.R.] must be mentioned as exceptions. They do say something definite.

Chamber music.

There is a curious little string quartet from Bilbao (Comision permanente), a Tema variado by J. C. de Arriaga. Grove's note on this Spanish composer awakens interest in his music. This example is mild enough, skilfully written as befits the work of a gifted musician, as evidently he was. Nine Fantasies for two violas, by Thomas Morley, have been arranged for two violins by E. H. Fellowes [St.] They are beautiful things. A Folk Song Suite for string quartet by Eric Thyman [Aug.] is plain, easy and tuneful. Precisely the opposite can be said of Bernard van Dieren's third string quartet [O.U.P.], a remark not meant in any derogatory sense but simply as a statement of fact. James Lyon's one-movement string quartet [Aug.] is clearly and effectively written and is suitable for proficient amateurs as well as for the concert platform.

Songs.

Edmund Duncan-Rubbra has written a successful song in 'A Duan of Barra' [O.U.P.]; it keeps all through an atmosphere which has been suggested in the opening bar. Two songs by M. van Someren-Godfrey [Aug.] have lightened the way through this large collection of review copies. In both cases the words are interesting, and by poets seldom chosen for this purpose. 'Go teach the swan to swim,' a setting of a poem by E. N. da C. Andrade, is the better composition. It has more stable form than his setting of Edith Sitwell's 'The King of China's daughter,' though that too is a worthy piece of writing, if a little diffuse. Both these songs show promise. Rebecca Clarke's three Irish county songs [O.U.P.] are set for voice (high) and violin. They are well done and should sound excellent, given a fiddler who can keep in the middle of each note, and a voice that can do likewise. The going is not easy.

We now come to four songs by Ivor Gurney [O.U.P.] which deserve special notice. They are all to be recommended as good examples of a certain style of English song writing that has affinity to the work of Stanford. There is in them the same close attention paid by the composer to how the thing is best to be done, how small means may be used to fullest advantage, how poem and music may be made to be a mutual help to each other. Gurney has not yet the mastery that

Stanford reached by the end of a long life. But 'The two corbies' (first published in *MUSIC AND LETTERS*, April, 1920) is a sound song. It could not have been easy to set. The narrative form is always liable to endanger the purely musical aspect of a work, and in a fairly extended tale such as this the problem of form will have to be carefully kept in view. Gurney succeeds on both counts and the result is a song which raises itself above its fellows. The word 'great' must be used sparingly, but probably this is the right moment for it to appear. The three remaining songs are of a different kind, belonging to the pastoral order, settings of poems which deal with fields and footpaths, a typically English style of sentiment which you either feel strongly or just don't understand at all. There is no telling to which set any given person will be found attached. But there is a large section of us who delight in these simple pleasures and obtain an almost passionate thrill from such poems. Gurney evidently has felt the thrill. 'The fields are full' (Edward Shanks) is delightful. 'A walking song' is equally charming, but the verses are difficult to sing with their 'O Cranham ways are steep and green'—rather dogmatically topographical. But that has nothing much to do with the song-setting, which is simple and adequate. There remains the most beautiful of these three, 'Severn Meadows,' words by the composer. It is very short, but within the twenty-six bars of stately soft music there is contained a peculiar quality of emotion that must be heard to be realised, and sung to be most enjoyed. Like George Butterworth's 'Loveliest of trees' it seems to do nothing but flow on. But in each case the effect is unfathomable.

Frank Bridge's 'The primrose' (K.P.) is to Herrick's words. Inevitably there is a contest, in settings of old poems, between two ways of expressing an emotion. The music must either be anachronous or do violence to the words. This setting is quite pleasant, but it falls between the two stools. So, too, does Peter Warlock's setting of 'Passing By,' though this has an engaging pertness, which some may think out of place, but which undeniably gives the song character. Peter Warlock, one of our most indefatigable song-writers, has two manners. The one is hearty and open-air, and is fitted with music that comes from folk song and dance. The other is more artificial, and the music shows study of Delius and also van Dieren. In both cases success is nearly always attained, for this composer knows his business extremely well. In the first class of song there are two songs for notice here, 'Tom Tyler' and 'Elore Lo' [Aug.]. Here, as ever, there is a number of delightful harmonic devices. The rhythm of this type of song is generally obvious and constant. The second class of song is represented here by 'And wilt thou leave me thus' and two settings of poems by Arthur Symonds: 'A prayer to Saint Anthony of Padua' and 'The sick heart.' This is a different matter. The rhythm is broken continually, there is a more word-for-word method used, the harmonies are often interrupted in their smooth motion by deliberate crudities. 'And wilt' is of considerable beauty. The pianoforte part seems thick for placing with a single voice. Accompanists will have to look to this.

Another example of a modern setting to old words is Robin Milford's admirable memorial song (for H. C. Bradby's leaving Rugby) 'Old age.' But here the difficulty is solved by a frank use of a musical idiom that first suits the words, not this present time. And

the result is good [O.U.P.]. D. M. Stewart has gone even farther back, to fourth century China. But there again the problem is not quite the same, for the Chinese date not at all in the way they put a sentiment, or at least not in a Waley translation. Of these two songs 'Plucking rushes' is the better. Patrick Benyon's two songs [Ch.] suffer from being poorly arranged musically. All those octaves in the accompaniment are an unnecessary labour both for composer and pianist, besides overweighting the singer. The songs ('With mirth, thou pretty bird rejoice' and 'The ribbon song') are nicely felt, a kind of good style of popular writing, saved by being musical. And in that one quality they stand higher than Edith Harrhy's 'Roses for the King.' This composer must make up her mind either to write a real song (which this attempt shows she might well do) or to write a best-seller. It is impossible to do the former if you set out with the idea of doing the latter. Which is the more worth while? And then—the words. A poem, or a string of platitudes?

And finally a song by Dennis Arundell which is of interest as being the sole example of an English writer sufficiently imbued with the spirit of modern German music to be able to use it properly and effectively. 'Leave me, O Love' is not at first attractive. Played often it says something distinctly. It deserves a good singer, and it would please a musicianly one.

Reprints of songs.

An excellent edition of Thomas Ravenscroft's 'Pammelia, Musicks Miscellanie, or Mixed Varietie of Pleasant Roundelays, and delightfull Catches, of 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 Parts in one' has been issued by O.U.P. and transcribed and edited by Peter Warlock. This is a possession (for those who can afford a guinea for the large paper edition). The contents is nearly always charming; or if not that, then interesting; or if not that, then ingenious, as a puzzle. There is a cheaper edition for schools at two shillings. Four ditties from Arne's 'Alfred' are welcome, set with accompaniment for pianoforte by Adam Carse. There is a useful edition of Graves's and Charles Wood's 'Irish countryside songs,' vol. 2.

Sc. G.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

H.M.V.

Orchestral. Mendelssohn: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Overture and Scherzo) (Alfred Hertz and The San Francisco Symphony Orchestra). This is another excellent record from America. The playing of The San Francisco Orchestra is irreproachably neat and there can be nothing but praise for this example of their work. Tone, tune and, above all, *tempo* are always exact. The record is an actual transcription of the music, unadorned and strictly controlled.

Mozart: *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* (John Barbirolli's Chamber Orchestra). Evidently English players can be neat and precise too. Here is an example as fine as the foregoing, with the music left, or so it seems, to speak for itself. The third record of the four has the ravishing coda, after which there comes a delicious Purcell hornpipe that stands perfectly beside the Mozart movements. This set of records is to be recommended.

Edward German: *'Henry VIII' Dances* (Malcolm Sargent and The New Symphony Orchestra). For those whose taste is for the better style of light music these performances of the immensely popular German dances will be of value. They are extremely well done, with evident care and a certain deftness, as though the players rather liked, as naturally they did, making much of this pretty stuff.

Verdi: *Overture to 'La Forza del Destino'* (Creatore's Band). The music here is of great interest. Its performance leaves something to be desired. It is rather careless of detail, a method that does not suit Verdi, however much his work may seem un-subtle or cut-and-dried in its lay-out. On this record there is some loose playing, places where the rhythmic pattern wants stretching tighter.

Richard Strauss: *The Dance of the Seven Veils from 'Salome'* (Otto Klemperer and The Berlin State Opera Orchestra). The records strike one as being very noisy, but so it should be if it is to recall the actualities of the opera. The playing sounds adequate, as far as can be gathered without a score, and the highly chromatic orchestration seems to lose little of its

effectiveness in this reproduction. A large gramophone in a large room, would make something astonishing of these two sides.

Liszt: *Polonaise No. 2* (Leo Blech and The Berlin State Opera Orchestra), an orchestral arrangement by Muller-Berghaus. Either the work is a dull one, or the arrangement (which makes a very heavy score) is not right, but the result is not pleasing. Why, among all the remarkable orchestral works still awaiting performance for the gramophone, this curiosity should have been chosen, it is difficult to guess. The orchestral playing in this case is good, and there is plenty of scope for brilliant execution.

Richard Strauss: *Two Excerpts from Act 3 of 'Rosenkavalier.'* This is a disappointment, for the actual performance is a poor one. The records were made during a public performance in the State Opera House in Berlin last year. Who was singing, who playing, who conducting, we are not told. But whoever they were they struck a bad patch on that night. Following with the score it is possible to see what a great number of times they fail, chiefly in matters of ensemble.

Brunswick.

Borodin: *The Polovtsian Dances from 'Prince Igor'* (Nikolai Sokolov and The Cleveland Orchestra). This is a good plain musicianly recording of music, most of which is familiar because it forms part of the ballet that is frequently seen over here. The whole opera, of which this is a small fragment, has not been given here since the early Joseph Beecham seasons.

Vocalion.

Grieg: *Pianoforte Concerto* (Maurice Cole). This shares with so many other recordings of pianoforte music a *distorting evanescence of tone*, a feature which is very noticeable in this case. Mr. Cole plays the concerto very capably but with rather a hard touch, which may account for some degree of the annoying quality noted above. But not altogether, for the orchestral instruments do not wholly escape the plague. As for the per-

formance it rattles gaily along, and that is about all there is to say for it. It is efficient.

Roger Quilter: *A Children's Overture* (Stanley Chapple and The Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra). These pleasant tunes strung together with skill and orchestrated with point, sound delightful. It is a good idea to have put this overture within reach of a wider public than heretofore. The work is quite adequately played, and since the record is cheap (2/-) it ought to penetrate easily a thousand nurseries, and will surely amuse the inmates.

H.M.V.

Vocal. Benedict: '*The Moon hath Raised her Lamp above*' (Walter Glynn and Stuart Robertson). A sheer curiosity. Presumably there must be a public for this kind of thing, other than the musical historian interested in the creations of the mid-nineteenth century in England, or the octogenarian culling a fleeting memory. Otherwise such banalities could not be perpetuated. But how funny it all sounds now, with its complete lack of feeling, its intensely unadventurous manner.

Go rather to the records by Stuart Robertson of three traditional songs: *Solomon Levi, Clementine, John Peel*, and *There is a Tavern in the Town*. These are well sung (a little too much of a whistle on the 't') and at least the Benedict pretentiousness is absent.

Thomas: *Two songs from 'Mignon'* (Lucrezia Bori). The singing of these songs ('*Connais-tu le pays?*' and '*Me voici dans son boudoir*') is of a delightful quality. There is a slight hardness on some of the open French vowels, but the general tone and the phrasing are excellent. The same may be said of two songs sung by Aureliano Pertile to the accompaniment of members of the La Scala orchestra, Milan, conducted by Carlo Sabajno.

Mattinata by Leoncavallo is short and to the point. *Non t'amo più* has more of the 'operatic' quality, or rather quantity. They both do well for Pertile's reputation.

The same orchestra and conductor provide two excerpts from *Lohengrin* sung by Pertile and Tellini. This sounds strange in Italian, though probably the earlier Wagner bears translation better (into Italian, that is) than the later, not so much as regards the language as the quite other manner of producing the voice. These two duets sound pure Italian operatic music, sung thus.

H.M.V.

Instrumental. Beethoven: *Trio in B flat major, opus 97*. *Pianoforte, violin and violoncello* (Cortot, Thibaud and Casals). These three artists made the best record to date of Schubert's pianoforte trio, opus 99. Their performance of this Beethoven trio is not as perfect in every detail, but it still is a better one than any former attempt and a most remarkable achievement. The points at which the players momentarily forsake their high standards are rare enough and so imperceptible, without a score, as to leave the general impression of fine ensemble work unimpaired. At times the violin tone sounds rather thin, and the pianoforte a shade harsh. But, after all, the performance of these three instrumentalists is so beautiful that any feeling but one of gratitude is stilled. Each player seems to know the work's every aspect. And to that they add a thorough knowledge of each other's methods. As to the music, it is almost impossible to speak of it without the use of superlatives. Beethoven, in these four movements, held manner and matter in closer harmony than ever before. It is incredible that by turning a handle and adjusting a needle loveliness like this slow movement can be heard at will.

Sc. G.



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